

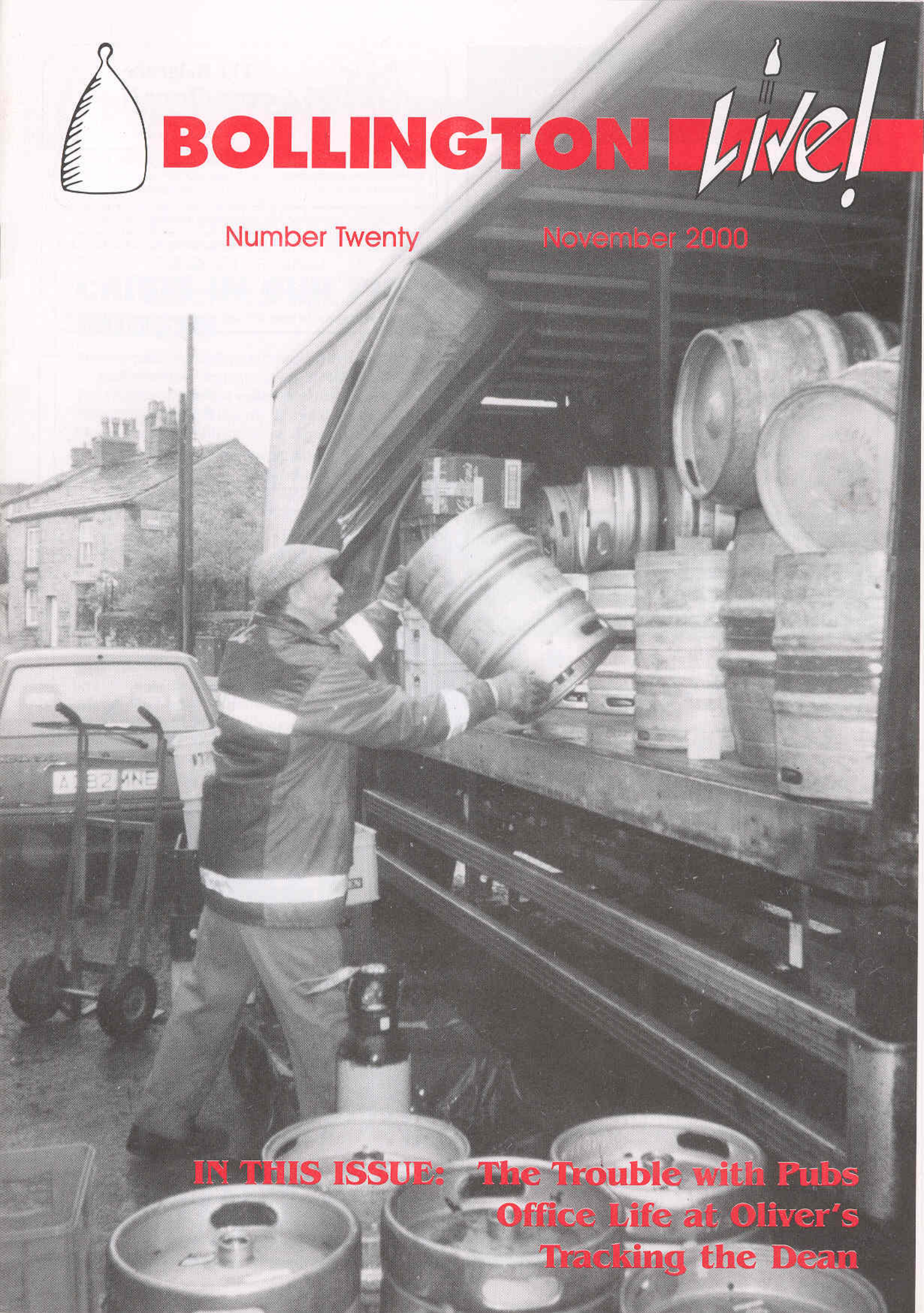


BOLLINGTON

Live!

Number Twenty

November 2000



IN THIS ISSUE: The Trouble with Pubs
Office Life at Oliver's
Tracking the Dean

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BOLLINGTON



Bollington Live! is published 3 times a year on a non-profitmaking basis, with free distribution to households in the town. Under the editorial banner of "Bollington a town in its own right!" we aim to promote local concerns. Contributions are welcome to the Editor c/o Bollington Medical Centre, Wellington Road, Bollington.

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Cover: Care for a beer? Bollington takes delivery, in Ingersley Road.

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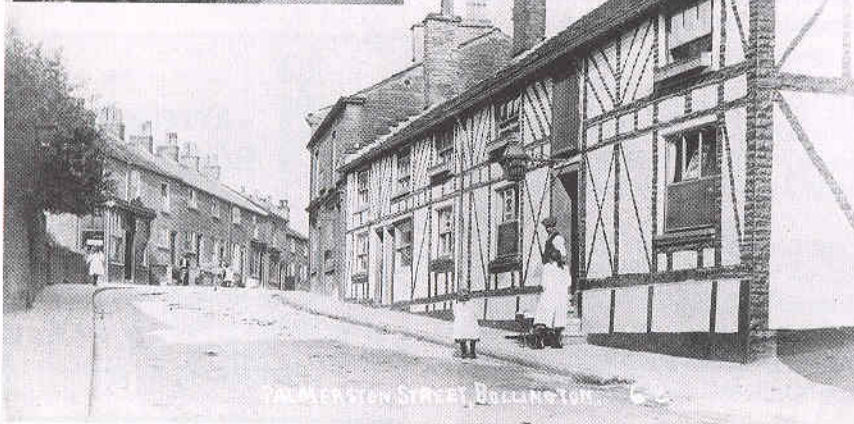
CRISIS IN OUR PUBLIC HOUSES

The Meridian sits with metal shutters over its doors and windows, more like a scene from Moss Side than gentle Bollington. The Vale remains up for sale. The Cheshire Hunt has called last orders for good and been turned into a private dwelling. The slightly ill-conceived Barge Inn in the Adelphi, and the bizarre Toad's nightclub have slipped un-mourned into the Macclesfield Canal. Which of our remaining pubs will be next?

Bollington has never been so prosperous and is growing, but demographically it is a very different place (for better or worse) than when most Bollingtonians worked within the mills and factories and the bus brought workers here, rather than to businesses elsewhere. Although many of us have more money, we need a good incentive to get us away from our sofas, the tele' and a bottle of beer. If we do fancy a night out, we can get to Macc., Wilmslow or Manchester, quickly and easily, if we want to. We all have many more leisure choices. Are our local pubs measuring up to the challenge?



Left: the Bollington tradition. From left to right, customers Harry Hough and Ken Stratton are seen with landlord Hedley Snape in the Cheshire Hunt in 1953. The other photos show the Meridian early in the 20th Century - and as it is now!



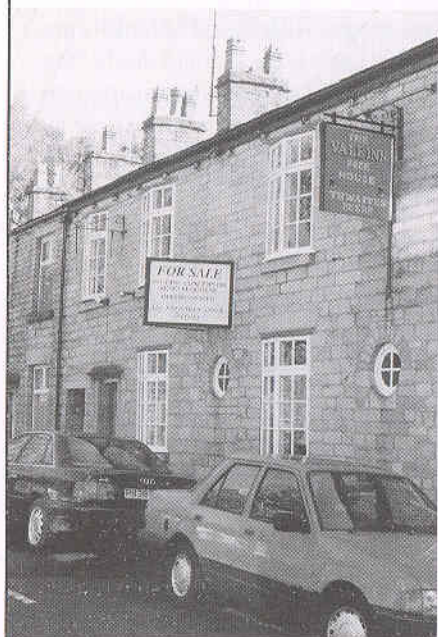
If the closures are anything to go by, obviously not. We are clearly voting with our feet. The owners of the Meridian, our oldest pub, say that it will reopen when suitable tenants are found. Let's hope so, but I doubt they will find it an easy proposition to persuade the regular pub-goers away from their favourite bars, or new punters away from their televisions.

Bollington's pubs are generally decent no-nonsense honest 'boozers' and I wouldn't want to change that. Fancy decor and sushi is neither what we want or what will work, but a bit more variety surely would not go amiss. Many of our pub's are pretty samey. They sell the same beer, have the same wallpaper and the same tune on the juke box; nobody likes the song and nobody knows who put it on. Many pubs across the country have been turned around just by offering a selection of real ales and putting some more interesting music on. How many times have you been to a pub somewhere and said "The ale was great and they played some good stuff on the stereo"? I know many people are put off pubs because of the cigarette smoke: how about some no-smoking rooms, or even a no-smoking pub? How about having an interesting selection of wines? Live music can work as well. Lets get the folkies out of their upstairs function rooms with the candles in the bottles and down into the bar to entertain us all! Dominoes are still quite popular in Bollington; why not try and revive some other traditional pub games like bar-skittles or, my own favourite, bar-billiards? Let's make our pubs more interesting. These initiatives would not be expensive to provide but could really make a traditional part of Bollington life, come to life. If we don't, the end result will be more closures and still less choice.

continued overleaf...

....continued from previous page

I know there are busy pubs in Bollington and clearly their landlords are managing their premises skilfully and are providing what their clientele want. If they have a winning formula who am I to suggest change. There are plenty of other establishments however, that are struggling. If they are to survive they need to find a way of re-inventing themselves to more closely match the leisure desires of modern Bollington. **TN**



The Vale Inn Today



Letters

Sir, - Your article "Building the Bollington Bridges" in the issue of August, 2000, and the question at the end, regarding the Clarence Mill chimney, reminded me of a story told me by my father-in-law.

His name was Jim King, he lived in Bollington Cross and he was born in the 1890s. He remembered the Clarence Mill having another chimney, somewhere at the rear of the mill and built of stone. According to Jim the chimney was demolished when he was a young man and the stone, carried by horse and cart was used to build a house in Hurst Lane.

I don't know if this story is correct, but one house, in particular, has very regular stones, so perhaps there is some truth in it.

*Margaret King
Wellington Road, Bollington*

Sir, - As a follow-up to the recent article on teenage life in Bollington, some friends in Kirkby Lonsdale sent us an item from their teenage daughter, who helps out by waitressing at a "Youth Cafe Bar":

"Re the Youth Cafe, the idea came from the local Youth Worker from the Methodist Church. It's been going on for about three months in the local Community Centre every Friday evenings from 7 to 9 pm, for 13 to 18-year olds. They can buy hot dogs, Coke (Coca Cola, not the other sort) and non-alcoholic cocktails. There's music and a pool table - and, of course, lots of chat. Most Fridays they get between 30 and 50 people attending - pretty good for a town of our size (population 2,000). Smoking, alcohol and anti-social behaviour are banned. There are always at least two adults there and a rota for the young people to help. There's been no trouble apart from complaints of excess noise from some local residents."

*Fiona Swales,
Southwest Avenue, Bollington*

A CHANGE OF EDITOR

Having done the job for over 6 years, John Liley is stepping down from the Editorship of *Bollington Live!* and handing over to Tim Neale. John will remain on the team, however, and, with Tim, welcomes newcomers to share the load! Anyone interested in giving us a hand is invited to contact Tim Neale, *Bollington Live!*, c/o Bollington Medical Centre, Wellington Road

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GOING WITH THE FLOW ...

The Future of the Dean

Sneaking its way in a rather secretive manner through Bollington is the River Dean. A small and somewhat inconsequential river in the greater scheme of things some might say, but without its influence carving its way through the valley over the last 10,000 years, this town would be a far different place.

For centuries the river valley was seen as an area of poor farmland, marshy and difficult to cross, until 200 years ago. Then, entrepreneurial mill owners saw the opportunity of the river and its potential for driving the water-wheels of industry. As more and more mills were built to tap into the Dean's power supply, and houses were built along the valley, the river soon became hidden through much of Bollington, and this is the way we find it today. Perhaps we should be making more of our river, and where possible making it accessible to the public, an attraction. In some sections this is clearly not possible, but in others, the idea is not beyond the realms of reality.

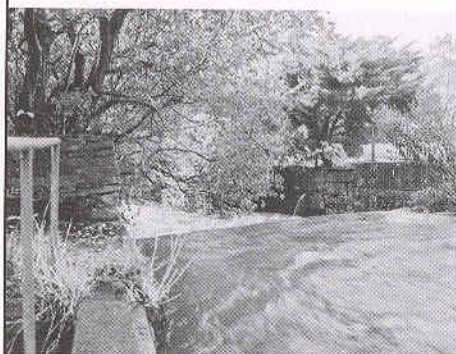


The junction of the Dean and Harrop Brook, behind the Drop-In Centre in the middle of Bollington; and the exit of the tunnel beneath the main road and canal aqueduct, at the point where the river flows into the Recreation Ground



the river was diverted through solid rock in the tunnel we see today while, up above this, the canal aqueduct was constructed. At the traffic lights in the roadway here, there is water both above and below.

continued overleaf...



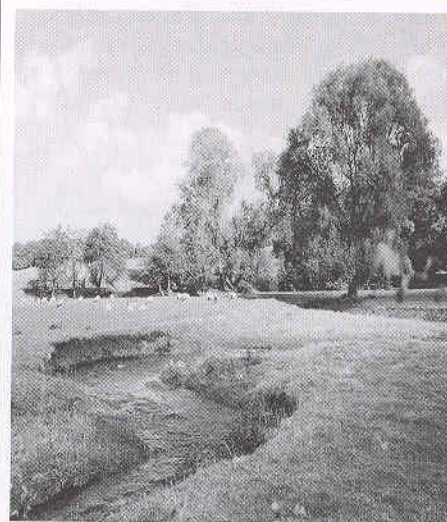
A weir holds back water by the Recreation Ground, in one of the few prominent portions of the Dean

Following the river through Bollington, we find dark tunnels and forgotten weirs, relics of industry - and sometimes, to compensate, flowering banks in proud back gardens. Our journey through Bollington begins at Higher Mill Pool, where the river emerges from the darkness of a tunnel under Rainow Mill. Sadly this pool has nearly silted up, and traces of oil are sometimes to be seen on its surface. The river itself here takes a turn behind the back of

Shrigley Dyers before passing under a bridge at Lord Street, then into the concrete channel by the car park of Tullis Russell's Lower Mill. The site of this car park used to be the mill pond for Lower Mill, of which the only remnant is the mill pond's weir, at the back of Park Street and Oldham Street. The water is forced through a narrow chute and a waterfall, before once again plunging into darkness as it travels under the back yards of Park Street.

Though out into the open again, the River Dean remains hidden from general view at the back of Water Street and the Market Place, flowing past the old school, then the site of the old foundry on John Street to a confluence with Harrop Brook. This is the Dean's main tributary, and from the back of the new Drop-In Centre this joining of forces can be seen. From here onward the river is more visible, running by the side of the war memorial, then under the Water Street Bridge.

A few yards beyond stands the most impressive piece of engineering on the route. When the canal was being built, the marshy river valley floor posed a problem. To overcome this,



The Dean at Lowerhouse. Look carefully at these fields: permission to build industrial units on the pasture to the right was endorsed at a recent enquiry. Misguidedly, many will say, the land was allocated for such development in the last Local Plan; a late effort by local campaigners to overturn this has now been frustrated. The consequence: parking spaces here for over 100 vehicles, much extra traffic through residential and schooling areas and six large sheds to blight the view. With an area in Tytherington also earmarked for industry, alternative space was available. Amazingly, officials in the Traffic Department of Macclesfield Borough could foresee no problems at Lowerhouse. Where do they live? JL

....continued from previous page

Emerging in full public view, the river is forced along a straight channel, built to create the playing fields of the Recreation Ground. Old photographs show the river meandering across what is now the football pitch. The waterfall at the downstream end maintained a level for a supply to Waterhouse Mill, and the sluice and diversionary channel now supply water to the Kay-Metzeler factory by means of a tunnel under Adlington Road and a section of narrow canal alongside the free-flowing river before the Viaduct. The facilities by the Middlewood Way Car Park represent the only attempt with the Dean to provide public access.

From here the River Dean resumes its private course, with, on one side the industrial units of Kay-Metzeler, and in total contrast, a pleasant stretch of woodland. A rocky outcrop prevents easy access through to Garden Street, where the narrow valley opens out into the wide flood plain taking us past Riverbank Drive and Calder Close to Lowerhouse, the site of the most downstream Mill on the river. The mill pond survives nearby and is a tranquil oasis at the back of the bustle of Lowerhouse Mill, while the river meanders through unspoilt fields, towards the Bollington boundary. The River Dean eventually joins the River

Bollin at Lacey Green, just beyond Wilmslow.

How about a vision for the river's future - a Dean Valley walkway? Should the river be made more accessible? With some imagination, much of the route could become a riverside park, stretching from the Recreation Ground to Lowerhouse. It is time we saw again the asset that is the River Dean, as did those mill owners of the Industrial Revolution long ago. Can we now, in the 21st century, see it as an asset in the Leisure and Tourism Revolution?

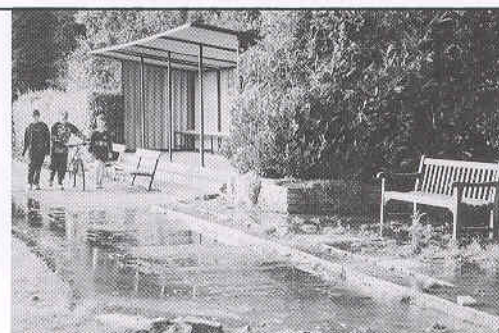
AH

.... AND A FLOW THAT IS GROWING

With water on the mind, so to speak, it is timely to contemplate also the Bollington Canal Burst - and the possibility of a repeat!

First of all the history: it was in the early hours of 29th February, 1912 that the Macclesfield Canal sensationally collapsed at Tinker's Clough. The water, after running

often, the cause is outside the canal itself : a collapsed culvert somewhere, persistent overflow from a nearby stream, floodwaters diverted ...



A recent scene on the Recreation Ground, with water from who knows where.



The great burst of February, 1912, recorded by George Vickers, who sold such views as postcards.

under the railway, flooded the town gasworks to the south of Grimshaw Lane, before swilling round the Waggon & Horses. Albert Road Fields received the floodwaters next, then the Dean at Lowerhouse. Local photographer George Vickers took a number of pictures of the hole in the embankment and the damage in the town, selling them as postcards.

Leaks in canals, not uncommon, are rarely as dramatic as this. When they are, it is often the result of some long-running leak that, unbeknownst, weakens an embankment. Equally

Just such a situation could be developing below the Clarence Mill, where for a considerable time, water has been seeping out of the embankment. Damage to the bowling green has resulted, while the cricket ground itself is turning into a quagmire. Some days are wetter than others, and the water is currently diverted, using sandbags, into a drain. But the flow, in general, is increasing.

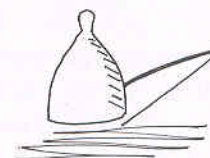
The water appears at several points, largely on a horizontal line at the foot of the trees beneath Clarence Mill. Though the problem has been known to Macclesfield Borough Council for over two years, the source remains a mystery. Roger Teagle, Supervisor for British Waterways, on the other hand, only learned of this matter last June, when it was brought to his attention by a member of the public.

Mr Teagle, plainly concerned, has had the flow examined by Board engineers, and, when *Bollington Live!* spoke to him, was about to co-opt them again. The canal has been tested

with dye, and so has the Clarence Mill Lodge, the fishing pool beyond the mill which stands at a higher level. The cause, Mr Teagle says, could be old drains, or an overflow from abandoned mineworkings up the hillside. Or, indeed, the canal itself could be the cause after all, since the testing with dye is by no means conclusive.

There are 23 miles of lock-free waterway up there, with no inhibitions about going downhill, and the emergency stop planks at the two nearest bridges don't look as though they could be got out in a hurry. So we may be depending on the Dean to clear an awful lot of extra water. Bollingtonians with local pointers to offer, or any background knowledge, are invited to contact Mr Teagle at the British Waterways office in Kids Grove. Watch this space.

JL



J.A. McNULTY

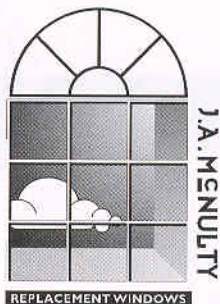
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BOLLINGTON



NOVEMBER

Wednesday, 8th

A CHRISTMAS DEMO

Bollington Flower Club Community Centre, Ovenhouse Lane, 7:30pm – 9:00pm. Ring Blanche Royall on 422835

Sunday, 12th

REMEMBRANCESUNDAY

Bollington Brass Band & Poynton Male Voice Choir. Bollington Methodist Church. Organised by the British Legion, 8:00pm. Tickets from Band Members. Contact Paul Barry.

Monday, 13th

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE AGM AND HOT SUPPER

Methodist Church, 7:30pm. Annual General Meeting followed by a hot supper. Contact Mary Foster on 573571

Thursday, 16th

"WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU LIVE"

Upstairs room of the Dog & Partridge. A talk by John Lamidey on the use of personal information on Marketing and Credit, on behalf of the Bollington Horticultural Society. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835

Friday, 17th

FUND RAISING AUCTION IN THE NEW DROP-IN CENTRE

Buyers of Fine Art and Superb Crafts invited to bid on the night (viewing from Monday 13th). 7:30pm at Bridgend, Palmerston Street

"THE GIRL WHO CUT FLOWERS"

The Rural Touring Network Horse and Bamboo Theatre Company present a visual language story about a girl growing up. It combines powerful masks with shadow imagery and black light effects. This performance is suitable for the family; however children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Bollington Arts Centre 7:30pm. Tickets £4.00 (£3.00 children) £11.00 family. Contact 575287, 560535 Evening

Monday, 20th

"HOW BETTER TOWN PLANNING COULD IMPROVE LIFE IN BOLLINGTON"

A talk by Graham Barrow at the Civic Society Meeting (following the brief AGM). Bollington Arts Centre, Wellington Road, at 8:00pm

Saturday, 25th

THE EAGLE JAZZ BAND

Established in 1951, they are "probably the most entertaining jazz band in the Midlands". Bollington Arts Centre, 8:00pm. Tickets £7.00. Contact 575287, & 560535 (evening).

Monday 27th

BOLLINGTON BUSINESS GROUP

Meeting to launch the Group. Bollington Arts Centre, 8.00pm. Contact Graham Barrow on 573807 or Glen Leathley on 576636.

DECEMBER

Saturday, 2nd

POLICE CONTACT DAY

Meet your Community Constable and tell him whatever concerns you about law and order in Bollington. 10am to 12 noon at the Town Hall

Sunday, 3rd

"KING LEO"

The Bollington Children's Music Theatre presents an ecological adventure set in the jungle. This musical by Cecilia McDowell and Sarah Dawson has been described as the "antidote to seasonal musicals". Bollington Arts Centre, 4:30pm & 7:30pm. Tickets £4.00 (£2.50 concessions). Contact 575287 daytime, 0161 427 2870 evening.

Thursday, 7th

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS DINNER DANCE

Belgrade Hotel, 7:30pm, Contact Blanche Royall on 422835

Saturday, 9th

"THREE'S COMPANY"

Bollington Chamber Concerts introduce 'The Three': Andrew Long, violin; Carolyn Hargreaves, soprano and Stewart De'Ath playing piano, performing Brahms, Debussy, Mozart and a Christmas Medley. Supported by North West Classical Music Tours. Bollington Arts Centre, 8:00pm. Tickets £10.00 & £3.00 (Children, students & claimants) Contact 575287.

Monday, 11th

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Methodist Church, 7:30pm, Contact Mary Foster on 573571.

Wednesday, 13th

BOLLINGTON FLOWER CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

Community Centre, Ovenhouse Lane 7:30pm – 9:00pm. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835.

Tuesday, 19th

MESSIAH FOR ALL

The annual opportunity for all to perform Handel's masterpiece. Mince pies on offer during the interval. Bollington Arts Centre, 8:00pm. Tickets £2.00 on the door.

Sunday, 24th

CAROL SERVICE

All welcome at the Town Hall beside the Christmas Tree for the annual Carol Service, 6:00pm.

JANUARY

5th – 7th & 11th – 13th

THE SNOW QUEEN

Performed by the Bollington Festival Players. Based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen and accompanied by the music of Edward Grieg, performed by Winfred and King Palmer. Bollington Arts Centre, 2.00pm (6th, 7th & 13th), 7:30pm (5th – 7th & 11th – 13th) Tickets £4.50, £2.50 (concessions), £12.00 (family). Contact 572527.



Monday, 8th

"TABLETS OF STONE"

A talk by Mr. Burgess on behalf of the Women's Institute. Methodist Church, 7:30pm. Contact Mary Foster on 573571.

EVENTS

Wednesday, 10th

BOLLINGTON FLOWER CLUB AGM

Community Centre, Ovenhouse Lane
7:30pm – 9:00pm. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835.

Thursday, 18th

BOLLINGTON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY MEETING AGM

Upstairs room, Dog & Partridge, 8:00pm – 9:30pm. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835.

Sunday, 21st

HEDGELAYING

Have a go at the ancient art, with the rangers at Middlewood Way Car Park, Adlington Road. 10.30 to 3.30, or for shorter sessions within that period. Instruction and tools provided. Packed lunch and boots are needed.

Sunday, 28th

WINTER TREE WORKSHOP

Add value to winter walks by identifying different trees. A short walk with ranger Trish Furze is followed by an indoor session. 2 to 3.30 pm. Meet at Middlewood Way Car Park, Adlington Road. Boots and binoculars required, hot drinks provided.

Sunday, 28th

BACH'S MASS IN B MINOR

Performed by Bollington Festival Choir and orchestra, conducted by John Coope, at Bollington Methodist Church Hall. Tickets £7 from Bollington Medical Centre, or reserved on 573494.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, 14th

BOLLINGTON FLOWER CLUB

Community Centre, Ovenhouse Lane
7:30pm – 9:00pm. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835.

Monday, 12th

"PENNINE CHESHIRE"

Women's Institute presents a talk by Mr. Beeken. Methodist Church, 7:30pm. Contact Mary Foster on 573571.

Thursday, 15th

BOLLINGTON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY MEETING

Upstairs room of the Dog & Partridge. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835.

Saturday, 17th

DUKE STRING QUARTET

A welcome return for this talented group, with a programme of Beethoven, Arvo Part and Cole Porter. A Bollington Chamber Concerts production, at the Arts Centre, 8pm. Tickets £10, £3 for children. Tel. 575287/560355.

MARCH

Saturday, 3rd

SPRING SHOW

At Civic Centre, 2:00pm – 6:00pm
£0.50 entrance fee. Contact Kath Moore on 429338 for schedule & details.

Wednesday, 14th

BOLLINGTON FLOWER CLUB

Community Centre, Ovenhouse Lane
7:30pm – 9:00pm. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835.

Monday, 12th

"SIMPLE DESSERTS"

A demonstration by Mrs. Lyn Blackburn on behalf of the Women's Institute, Methodist Church, 7:30pm. Contact Mary Foster on 573571.

Thursday, 15th

BOLLINGTON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY MEETING

Upstairs room of the Dog & Partridge. Contact Blanche Royall on 422835.

Saturday, 17th

ORGAN RECITAL WITH NIGEL OGDEN

The organist from BBC Radio 2 performs at the Methodist Church. Contact Pat Burgess 875322.

Wednesday, 21st

A CIRCULAR RAMBLE

Taking in the sights and sounds of Bollington Cross and Whiteley Green, led by ranger Matt Mayers. A 4-6 mile walk, starting from the Cock & Pheasant car park, Bollington Cross at 10 am.

Friday, 30th

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Emily Bronte's powerful drama, adapted by Lynn Robertson., performed by the Oxford Touring Theatre Company at the Arts Centre, Wellington Road. £5, Concessions £3. Tel 575287/560355, or enquire at West Bollington Post Office.

Saturday, 31st

KONTRASTE

With flute/recorders, violin and harpsichord, playing Quartz, Handel, Murrill, Pugnani-Kreisler, Telemann, Bach and Scarlatti. A Bollington Chamber Concerts production at the Arts Centre. Tickets £10. Tel 01625-575287/560355.

DO YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR FRENCH?

Have you already a grasp of vocabulary and use of verbs, but just don't get the opportunity to chat - other when in France itself? How about an hour each week, on Thursdays from 2 to 3 pm, led by a French lady tutor at Bollington Arts Centre? A cost is proposed of £18 for six lessons. If you are interested, please call Penny Liley on 01625-572348

NEW BUSINESS GROUP FOR BOLLINGTON

A new business group has been formed for Bollington. At an inaugural meeting on 23 October it was decided to officially launch the group which will meet in the Bollington Arts Centre bar on Monday 27th November at 8.00pm. The idea of the group was dreamt up by Graham Barrow, a self employed environmental and heritage consultant, and by Glenn Leathley of Chartered Accountants Jackson Sharpe.

The aim of the group is to give support to self-employed and small business managers whose businesses are in Bollington. An informal atmosphere is planned and the bar will be operating. There will be guest speakers, a chance to make new contacts and the opportunity to discuss business ideas with a supportive group. If anyone wants to find out more please contact Graham on 573807 or Glenn at Jackson Sharpe on 576636. The group is open to anyone whose business is located in Bollington.

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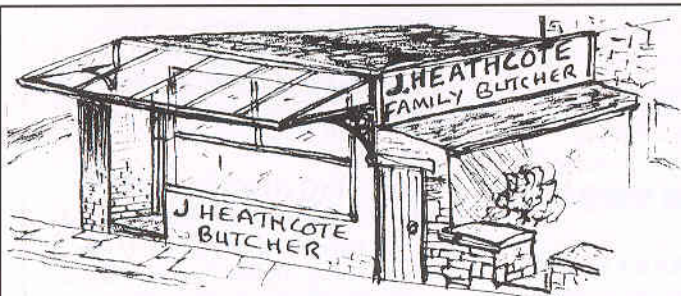
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CATCHING THE PRESTBURY TRAIN

-with a walk on the way

It is less than a mile, as the crow flies, from the 'Cock & Pheasant' at Bollington Cross to the railway station at Prestbury. Since Bollington station closed, in 1970, people wanting to catch a train have had to get to Macclesfield, Prestbury or Adlington. How many of us might choose to walk or cycle to the nearest, Prestbury, if there was a safe path? The present route by road is dangerous for walkers, and both Flash Lane and Prestbury Lane are without a pavement in parts.

At a *Bollington Live!* get-together, Graham Barrow went on to ask: "How about a joint project, between Bollington, Prestbury and Cheshire County Council to negotiate and construct a footpath and cycle route to Prestbury station?"

How much would need to be done? A look at the Ordnance Survey map reveals several paths. In the interest of examining the alternatives I picked out one of these, making a return by the link that Graham had in mind, on public roads.

First of all, the Scenic Route (Time to reach the station, 40 minutes):

From the 'Cock & Pheasant', Flash Lane branches off to the west. This is one of the ancient highways of the

area; but the initial 300 yards is blessed by a relatively modern feature: the civic pavement. This extends as far as the first group of houses, where a footpath branches southwards into pasture. Just 200 yards from the road, by a little pond, and a somewhat larger bog, a right-angled turn takes the walker into a gully. Here is a stile, a wooden bridge across a stream, and a climbing flight of steps. Cows gather here; there is sedge and club-rush. Were it not for the busy highway at the top, this could be a scene from 'Cider With Rosie'.

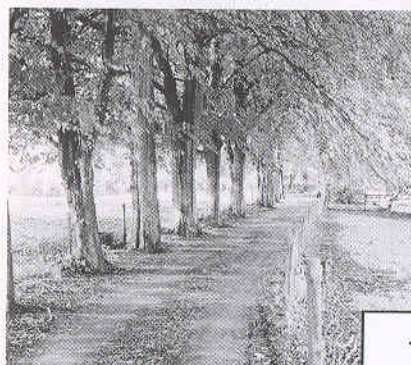
Protective railings mark the main Macclesfield-Stockport road. Those who are nimble enough should be able to cross after a minute or two; others may have to wait until the next petrol shortage, but the footpath beyond is delightful. A stile gives access to a tree-lined driveway serving

several houses. Then, at the farther end is the old main road, less busy than the new one and, across it, the start of Heybridge Lane. This is a winding road into Prestbury. There is no pavement here at first, and some tightish bends, but a 30 mph speed limit sobers most drivers, while the owners of several large houses have mown the verges. It is not absolutely safe, but habitual walkers will have experienced far worse.

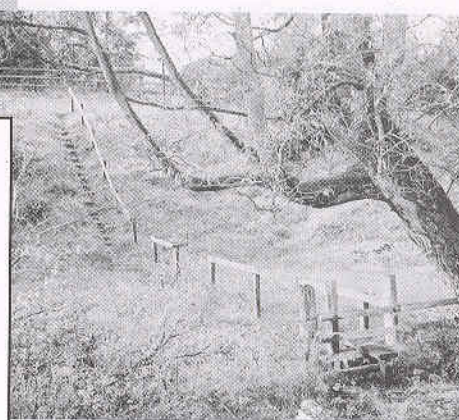
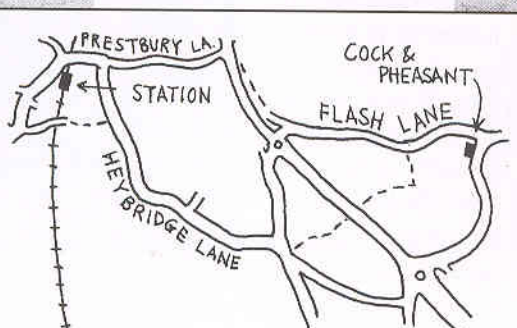
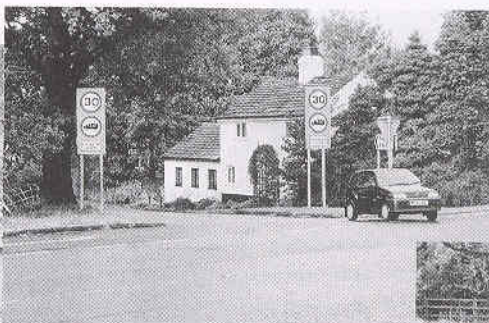
A pavement crops up half way along; but when it does an alternative path to the left enables those with time to spare to perform a pincer movement and take the station by surprise. Crossing the line at a footbridge you may then walk back up the main road from Prestbury village in the direction of Bollington. As far as pavements go this last section is a model: a pleasant tarmac track, elevated above the roadway, and up amongst the trees.

Though not the quickest means of reaching the station, this is an agreeable walk in its own right, unexpectedly attractive given the highways in the area.

continued overleaf...



Views on the scenic walk. Beyond the stile and steps on the right, lies the Macclesfield-Stockport Road. The driveway, above, stands in sheltered surroundings a short way beyond, leading to Heybridge Lane, seen in the upper picture. Dashes on the map indicate the paths taken on the "Scenic Route"



....continued from previous page

Good boots are needed, though; and I would not attempt it in pinstripes.

The Direct Route (Time: 20 minutes)

Taking this back from Prestbury station to Bollington, there is a pavement for the first 150 yards before the route, via Prestbury Lane, dives off down a dip. For about a quarter of a mile this is keep-your-wits-about-you territory, narrow at first, unpaved, absolutely dependent upon considerate driving.

The Macclesfield-Stockport road, on the other hand, once it has been reached, and crossed, is surprisingly easy. The old course of the highway lies beyond, sheltered from the din by trees. Though traffic here is nil a footpath is provided, with street-lighting to boot.

Municipal generosity is also to be found on the first part of Flash Lane, in the form of a wide new pavement. This, however, stops just where it is needed most, at the point where the road gets narrow. It is surprising how quickly you can trot up a dodgy part like this, 350 yards of vulnerability.



The agreeable pavement in Prestbury. Such a track provides a model, possibly, for the difficult portion of Flash Lane seen in the lower photo.

I encountered, in the first fifteen seconds, a tractor drawing some device for filleting manglewurzles, followed close behind by a bulldozer. There were also lots of cars and wayward Transit vans. For the walker this is not a fun experience. Nor is crossing the dreaded main road, where a pedestrian underpass might enter the agenda the next time our road engineers consider the humanitarian aspects.

As to Prestbury Lane, one solution, an anathema to motorists in a land where their territory is rarely reduced, would be to declare the road closed. An exception could be made to those who live there. 'Sauf Riverains' is the sign they put up in France. Crazy? Let the idea take root, then see how many roadside residents would go for it, up and down the land.

One Final Consideration:

Prestbury station, a mixture of Victorian whimsy and post-electrification brutality, has no platform staff, no ticket-seller, no-one to look after bicycles and, if you go there on Sunday at the wrong time of year, no trains. The Sunday service, even in full trim, is miserable, with just three trains in each direction, all in the later part of the day.

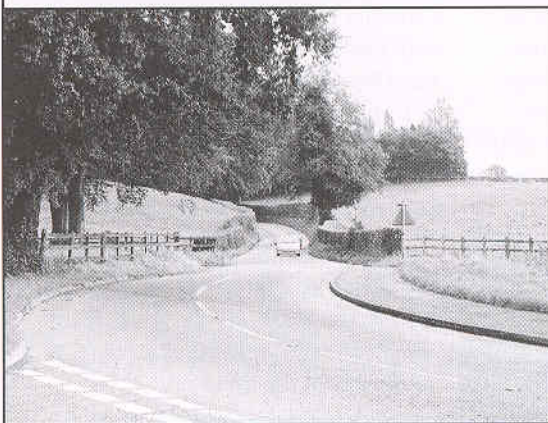
Could it be better, and could there really be a cycle way from Bollington? Consider the expense! But in much of

mainland Europe, such things happen. Look too, at the trains, say, in the Netherlands.

Take an example there, the hourly service from Leeuwarden, in the north, to Staveren, 30 miles away. The fare, without any of the concessions on offer, is £4.14 at the current rate of exchange, by comparison with £4.45 from Prestbury to Manchester, a journey of half the distance. Importantly, there is NO reduction in the service on Sundays, as that is when people wish to travel. On such a civilised, well ordered system, that is affordable by a family at any time of day, it is a *desirable* way to travel. And bicycles? No problem.

At Prestbury, if you managed to get there by bike without being mown down, there is no-one to keep an eye on it for you. The old station building is up for sale. The logic of this, I suppose, is the realisation of assets. In other words, the operating company's interests are put before Society's.

So, Bollington's station is closed, while the next nearest is tatty, badly serviced and difficult to reach. Please, after so much muddle over the years, and desolation of our landscape, let us not be told it is too expensive to start putting these matters right. A safe track for cyclists and walkers could be part of this process. JL



Looking up Flash Lane in the direction of Bollington Cross. Note the spacious pavement on the right, suddenly losing interest when the going gets harder.

A new track in the fields here would bypass this difficult part of Flash Lane. There is space, if the land could be purchased. Whether it would look right is a matter to consider, a challenge, and the path at Prestbury provides an admirable yardstick.

The biggest difficulty in making this route secure is the perilous part of Prestbury Lane. There, when I tried it,

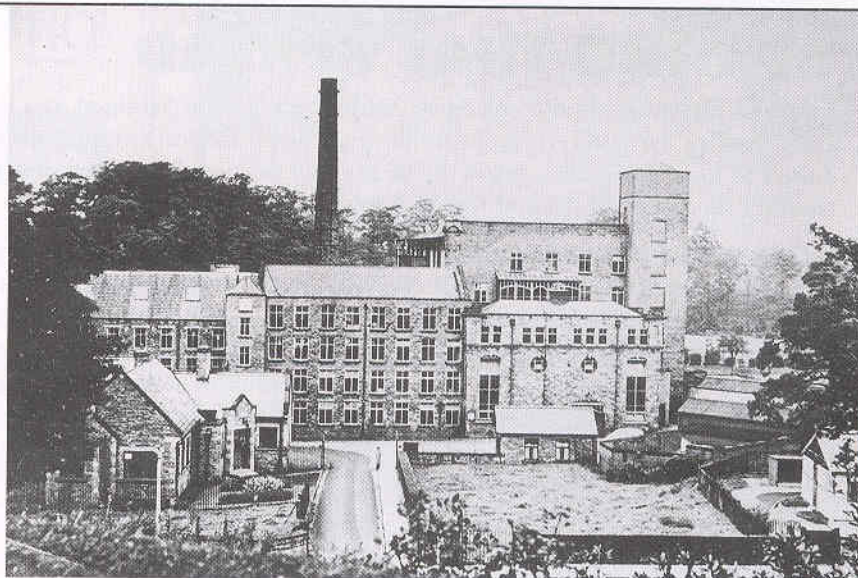
In the Office... at Oliver's by Roy Arnold

I don't suppose it is grand enough to be a Listed Building, yet the original office block of Thomas Oliver's Waterhouse Mill, near to Bollington Medical Centre, probably has associated memories for many an ex-cotton-worker in Bollington. It is now owned by Kay-Metzeler and stands behind their modern building on Wellington Road where most of their office staff are now housed.

In the days before the old mill was demolished, this stone-built block was the management and administrative centre for Oliver's Mill. I worked there for a while as a Junior Clerk, in the then awkward waiting period between School and National Service. Near to the Office Block as such - and still there - was another small structure where Miss Millar reigned supreme. She was Personnel Officer for the Cotton Mills of Bollington (Oliver's and Swindell's) all of which were part of the "Combine": Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers Ltd. of which the Head Office was in Manchester. It was Miss Millar who took me on as the latest in a long line of Arnolds to "work in the cotton".

Back in the Block's front room, Ted Hughes was in charge of the Telephone Switchboard, unless it was a Tuesday or a Friday when Ted would shed his brown coat overall to become Chauffeur to the two Oliver Brothers, the then remaining descendants of Thomas Oliver who had founded the business. Always referred to as "Mr. Ian" and "Mr. Gordon" their twice-weekly outing was to Manchester where they "went on Change" ... in other words attended the Cotton Exchange (now the site of the Royal Exchange Theatre in St Anne's Square, Manchester). Presumably Mr. Ian and Mr. Gordon would have their own pillar to stand beside, where, by gentlemen's agreement, all the deals of the cotton trade were done. If you visit the theatre today you can still see the numbered pillars.

With Ted Hughes away I was in charge of the Switchboard, a daunting task at first until I got used to it. Far more daunting, for someone as innumerate as myself, was



Waterhouse Mill c. 1960, showing the still surviving office block in the foreground.

balancing the Postage Book at the end of each week. Otherwise - with the aid of several stalwart adding machines - my jobs back in the main office were helping to make up the wages. It has always stuck in my mind that on the Wage List there was a lady working there called Nancy White whose name appeared on the list as White Nancy. There was filing to be done and other tasks and eventually I was put in charge of Mill Sales, selling, to employees of the mill, Sea Island Cotton vests and shirts, presumably made from cotton spun originally in Bollington where the finest in the world came from. I guess such shirts and vests would cost the earth nowadays, but then they were quite cheap.



Cone-winders in the mill at Christmas, 1955

Back in the main office the long-service staff members were Mr. John Moss, Mr. Alfred Bass, and Mr. Bunting among others. A white-jacketed Mr. Fred Jackson would appear from time to time from the Mill to bring stock lists or some such documents.

All this was back in the 1950s when the Cotton Trade was still significant in Bollington and "Happy Valley" was one of several trade names for the cotton spun in Bollington's moist air. Few then, I suppose, would have guessed that - as with so many other proud empires - King Cotton's reign was so soon to come to an end.



Mrs. I.M.L. Oliver, Mr. Oliver, and Miss Millar in the foreground at a long-service award ceremony at the mill in 1957

BEATING THAT SPREAD

I used to play football and regularly climb mountains in Scotland and the Lake District. I would cycle to the station and run for the train to get to work. I used to keep a waistline below 32 inches and my weight was around 11 stones. I used to be 30, fit and single! I used to, honestly!

What went wrong? I have now passed 50 (a while ago), my waist has reached 37 inches and the scales are struggling to keep under 14 stones. Like many of Bollington's middle-aged, (and have you noticed, there is an increasing number of us nowadays), I seem to be a little less active than I used to be! There was one short period (when I fell in love with an attractive Spanish woman who nagged me endlessly) that I managed to loose about 10 pounds, by changing my diet. Cutting out chips, peanuts and avocados, I remember, was the mainstay of my efforts, plus trying to eat more fish and use olive oil for cooking. Apart from that period of about a year, I think I have gained weight ever since I was born.

Well, in recent months I've begun to realise that my portly figure is attracting attention. Not the type that brings back youthful hormones, but those knowing comments from friends and family. Now be honest, all you Bollington middle-aged men and women; is there anything in this that rings a bell with you?

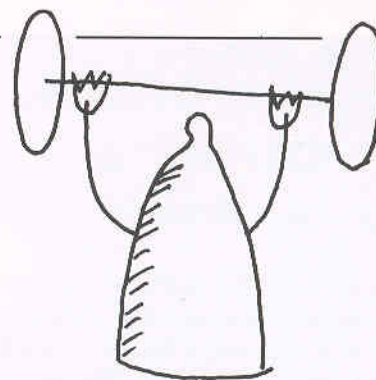
Now, I've tried jogging on my own, buying a bicycle and even reading

Nigel Lawson's slimming book, but none of that seemed to work. I could try to reduce my beer and wine intake or eat less, but lets face it, when you've been working all day, not to mention over 30 years, there are some pleasures that you deserve. So last month there was no option left but to join one of Bollington's two gyms.

There is the Leisure Centre at Bollington Cross and the General Fitness Company in the Adelphi Mill on Grimshaw Lane. I decided that some self-inflicted financial blackmail would do the trick. Part with a year's fee (about £300) and I was bound to try to get my money's worth!

If you haven't tried one of these modern gyms you might be surprised by how relatively painless the introduction is. They will show you the various machines, how to adjust them to be right for you and work out a simple programme for you to follow. Then you can go as many times as you like and hopefully get back to a more sensible and healthy weight and shape!

I've noticed that you don't have to have the latest trendy gear and there are all shapes, sizes and ages of people.



You may even make some new friends amongst the other "athletes". So, inspired by Britain's Olympic medal winners from Sydney, why not join me in trying to loose a little of that unwanted middle age spread?

See you in the pub!

GB

*Use of gym facilities at **Bollington Leisure Centre**, in Heath Road, costs £220 a year, rising to £320 if the swimming pool and sauna are to be used as well. Opening hours are 7am to 10pm from Monday to Thursday, inclusive, 7am to 8 pm on Fridays and 8am to 6pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Tel. 01625-574774*

*Charges at **The General Fitness Company**, in the Adelphi Mill, Grimshaw Lane are £300 a year, including use of the sauna. Hours are 8am to 9.30pm on weekdays and 9am to 4pm, Saturdays and Sundays. Tel. 01625-575760*

KERRIDGE BUILDER BAGS BRONZE

Just how fit you can be in middle-age was recently demonstrated by Kerridge enthusiast Alan Whitworth.

Competing in the 6th World Masters Track Cycling Championships at Manchester Velodrome, Alan gained a bronze medal in the 60-64 Age Group Final of the Men's Points Race, held over 40 laps, against competition from France, Ireland, Denmark and the USA.

Only half the width of a wheel separated Alan from a Gold Medal place. A keen cyclist over many years, Alan also helps out at the Velodrome, employing his building and woodworking skills to repair the track. While receiving his award, Alan took special pride in having built the podium himself!



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New at the Drop-In

Few people can have failed to spot the changes at the old farmhouse by Bridgend, at the foot of the hill in Palmerston Street, Bollington. Some might only have noticed a new coat of paint, while others may have been more intrigued to find out what had been going on at the new Drop-In Centre. The building has been transformed from a semi-derelict shell to its current status - a community centre for Bollington - thanks to the invaluable help of community service workers and numerous volunteers.

Work is still going on, for instance, to furnish a computer suite, and to provide more facilities for the varied range of activities happening in the building. Lena Johnson explained that this is just a start, and that the centre is



planning to further extend its range of activities. These currently include handicrafts, bingo, songs and stories for children, sing-alongs by the organ, poetry sessions, relaxation classes, quizzes, wood-skills, painting and drawing, film shows and snooker. In addition to this, Macclesfield College runs day classes here. It is hoped, also, to start a bridge class in the near future.

The centre has developed from being simply a place to 'drop in' for a chat and a coffee, and the new premises have made far more possible than could have been dreamt of in the limited space at the previous location in the Town Hall. However, the ethos

has not changed, it is still a place that is open for absolutely everyone, whether just for a friendly chat, or to take part in one of the activities.

One of the many successful projects here is the shopping service for housebound people. If you, or someone you know could benefit from this, please contact Sue McLennan to see if she can help. Visitor's needs are also catered for, with a comprehensive Information Centre, combining general and Town Council information with a link to Macclesfield Town Hall.

Not everyone, of course, can 'drop in'. Limited opening hours mean that a large sector of the Bollington population is unable to benefit at present; but, as Lena explains, the aim is to be open longer, as soon as finances permit, along with Borough and landlord's permission.

It was from a vision by Ann Mayer, to meet the needs of the people of Bollington that the Drop-In was first conceived, and in its new home, we have a developing organisation we can all be proud of - one of the most exciting community projects in Bollington for many years. Do 'drop in' and see for yourself.

AH

*The Drop-In Centre is open from 9.00am to 3.30pm, Monday to Thursday inclusive.
Tel: 01625- 576311.*



The Drop-In Centre premises in Palmerston Street, with volunteer Jill Wright, standing, giving guidance within the newly-equipped building.

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