



BOLLINGTON

Live!

Number Fifty Eight Summer 2013

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Editor Anthony Holland (01625 268047)
liveditor@happy-valley.org.uk
Design & Layout..... Anthony Holland, Simon Nottage
Editorial Team..... Tim Neale, Sandy Milson, Annette Hurst, Janet Beech, Carol Barnes, Simon Nottage, Mark Steadman, Ken Edwards, Steven Hurst, Kate Gooding.
Advertising Mark Steadman (01625 573227)
 Michele Leigh (01625 572953)
livedverts@happy-valley.org.uk
Distribution..... Janet Beech (01625 574618)
livedistribution@happy-valley.org.uk
Printed by Bollington Printshop (01625 574828)
Illustrations by..... Matthew Wray
Events Sandy Milson (01625 573191)

PLAYTIME

Sixty years ago Bollington Urban District Council laid out a special garden to commemorate the Coronation on June 2nd 1953 of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The gardens are now known as Coronation Gardens and they are reserved for the enjoyment of young children, their parents and carers.

The Bollington community celebrated the Queen's Jubilee with street parties, a Town Parade, a beacon by White Nancy and a fireworks display on the Recreation Ground. A volunteer group decorated White Nancy with a wonderful commemorative design and a special picture of it was sent to the Queen.

Now the Jubilee is over White Nancy has been returned to her white garb. The Town Council thought hard and decided that a more permanent recognition of the Jubilee was required. What better way to encourage our children to remember this great event than to turn Coronation Gardens into Diamond Jubilee Gardens?

A consultation was held, children from Dean Valley Community School were asked for their ideas and Cheshire East Council were persuaded to find some funding.



Bollington residents enjoying the new facilities.

Photograph: Simon Nottage

Marianne Hodgkinson, an experienced project officer worked with the Mayor, Ken Edwards and an artist Christine Wilcox-Brown to put together a plan to make the gardens even more child and family friendly while commemorating the Jubilee with a celebratory archway over the main gate.

As planned, the gardens were ready for the opening ceremony on Sunday 2nd June 2013 and as we hoped the younger children in Bollington were out in force to enjoy the new play equipment. Their parents and carers will also be able to relax with them, tell stories, enjoy a picnic and be amused by the presence of the large hare who appears as the storyteller.

Our thanks go to all those children who contributed ideas, to those people who commented on possible plans during the consultation and to the work of Cheshire East Borough Council and Bollington Town Council. A particular warm word of thanks to Christine Wilcox-Baker and Marianne Hodgkinson for their dedication to the practical realisation of our renewed children's playground. **Ken Edwards**

Left: Former Mayor Ken Edwards draws a large crowd on the opening day

Photograph: David Naylor

Date for next copy:
Friday 27th September 2013

EDITORIAL

Welcome to this, our summer edition of **Bollington Live!** I hope that you will find at least an article or two of interest.

Special thanks must go to the hard work of our advertising team - Michelle and Mark, along with our many local advertisers and sponsors, as we are once again able to continue with another twenty-four page issue.

It is never a difficulty finding enough articles to fill the pages we have. In a similar way to motorway building (the more lanes provided, the more traffic appears to fill them) even though **Bollington Live!** now has twice the number of pages it once had, there is still a surplus of submissions to squeeze in between the covers.

As always, I aim to fill the pages with articles in a broad spectrum of interests and this issue is no different. From the past we can learn about a job now consigned to history, with the story of 'The Last Knocker-up'. Current issues are not forgotten either, with articles regarding the Hurst Lane Canal Wharf and the recent battle to maintain the free school bus service to Tytherton High School. We also have the continuation of our 'Festival Novel - Bollington Lines'.

I would also like to thank, once again, our delivery team, who aim to deliver to every property in Bollington. Hopefully now that it is July, it will be a joy to walk around our streets delivering in the sun!

Best wishes for the summer.

Anthony Holland

THE LAST "KNOCKER-UP"

When I was told that the 91 year old daughter of William Harding, the last Clarence Mill 'Knocker-upper', was still living in Bollington, I was intrigued and couldn't wait to meet her and hear her memories.

Before I met her I thought I ought to do my homework, as although I had heard of the title, I had to admit I knew very little of the role. So I reached for my computer and began to Google the term. First turning to Wikipedia.... "A Knocker-up (sometimes known as a knocker-upper) was a profession in England and Ireland that started during and lasted well into the Industrial Revolution and at least as late as the 1920s, before alarm clocks were affordable or reliable. A knocker-up's job was to rouse sleeping people so they got to work on time"

What then of Elizabeth Oldfield's father, the last knocker-upper of Clarence Mill? William was born in Macclesfield in 1887. He eventually moved to Bollington to seek work, where he met a local girl whose family tree goes back in Bollington some 150 years on the female side. Her name was Mary Dooley.

William and Mary married in 1910 and had 5 daughters; Eva, born in 1911, Annie in 1915, Kate in 1920, Elizabeth in 1921 and finally the youngest, Esie, in 1930. The family eventually moved to live in Union Street (off Church Street, now the site of Shrigley Court). The children all attended St Gregory's RC School and were regular attendees at the Church. Unfortunately, Mary contracted rheumatoid arthritis in her 40's and became bedridden. This naturally placed a heavy burden on William and the sisters.

Elizabeth has really fond memories of her father and could recall vividly helping him in his task of waking up the hard working workers of Clarence Mill. It was a very early start for him with the mill workers needing to be at their machines by 6 in the morning. Elizabeth remembers, as a 12 year old, helping her father light his paraffin filled storm-light on the dark mornings. With the storm light and a long fork-ended stick with its wired, forked end, William would set off on his rounds.

Right: William Harding, Back row, arms folded wearing dark shirt and braces

Photograph: Discovery Centre collection



William, with Elizabeth often in tow, would trawl the Bollington streets knocking on the workers' bedrooms windows, not leaving until they were sure that the client had been awoken. Indeed, they would often go round to the house again to be certain! In return, William would be paid three pence a week. Young Elizabeth would also go with him to collect the monies and recalls that they were often told by the workers that they were finding it difficult to pay, as times were hard and money was in short supply!

Elizabeth also recounts one tale, in which her father told her he regularly saw one man, who despite William saying to him "Good Morning", the man never used to reply. It was only several weeks later, William discovered that the man had been sleep-walking every time he saw him!

Often, in other towns and cities, the job of the knocker-upper was carried out by elderly men and women, or sometimes police constables, who supplemented their pay by performing the task during early morning patrols. However, William, who I learnt was a very hard working man, in fact had several jobs! After his early morning knocker-up shift, he would go on a paper round and following this, he would then undertake his third job of the day as a postman!

Annie, William's second daughter, in her memoirs, also recalled that her Dad had a fourth job....

"During the Wakes holiday, there

was no holiday pay and Dad used to get a job with a local farmer"

However, there once was a real problem for William during this employment...

"The job involved heavy lifting and he came home in great pain one day. He had hurt his back and was unable to work and for the first time in his life, he had to apply for assistance from the Board of Guardians, as there was no sick pay. They agreed he could have thirteen shillings a week to keep us all, but they said if he couldn't manage on this amount, Mum and us would have to go in the workhouse. Dad was devastated and for the first time, I saw him cry. Luckily we managed, thanks in part to an old friend of Dad's who loaned us some money which was paid back in full when Dad was well enough to go to work".

William worked hard like this for approximately 20 years and when the knocker-upper role was phased out, William went to work in the Clarence Cotton Mill. Mary died in 1961 followed by William in 1962. They had been married for more than fifty years. **Kate Gooding**

Postscript

During the course of researching this article, I was also privileged to be put in contact with Carol Heaps; Annie's daughter and therefore, William's granddaughter. Carol kindly shared with me a copy of Annie's memoirs, which further illustrated her sister Elizabeth's memories of her father.



Above: The process of "Knocking-up"