

RAWMARSH AND PARKGATE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP.

MAY 2023.



CONTACT

Tony Dodsworth. 18, Great Bank Road, Rotherham, S65 3BP.

Phone 01709 363151.

E-mail ~ dodsworth@greatbank.f9.co.uk

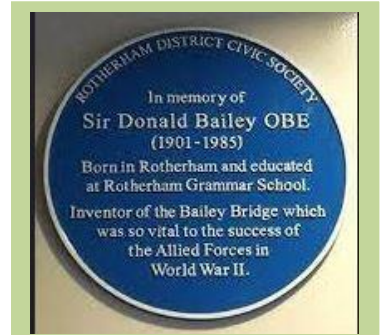
A TREAT FROM STANLEY STREET.

What a treat we had at our last meeting in March when member, Dave Smith, gave us an exhilarating insight into life in the Low End of Parkgate in the 1950s and 1960s. Times were very tough then, living in the few streets of terraced houses that made up the Low End but the community was very strong and neighbours were friends and helped each other out. The talk attracted our biggest audience for many years with 66 people hanging on Dave's every word. Dave also put on a display of numerous antique items to remind us of some of the things that were often found in our houses 60 or 70 years ago. At the end Dave was positively besieged with questions and spent the best part of an hour chatting about the Low End including with Barry Sayers, who had known Dave really well growing up together in Stanley Street. So much information was shared about the Low End that I have put a much more detailed account of Growing Up In the Low End of Parkgate on Page 2. We owe a great debt of thanks to Dave for providing us with such an unforgettable afternoon.

PARKGATE 200.

Latest News.

In 2023 Granby House on Aldwarke Road will receive the very first blue plaque in Rawmarsh and Parkgate. It will be dedicated to Charles John Stoddart who was living in the House in 1881. Stoddart is most well-known locally for his nearly 60 years association with the



The History Group will share the cost of the plaque with the Civic Society.

Park Gate Iron and Steel Co, rising from the Company's office boy in their London office (Yes there was one!) in 1854 to Secretary in Parkgate. He went on to be Works Manager, Managing Director and Chairman. He was also 4 times Mayor of Rotherham and the very first person to be granted the Freedom of Rotherham. He died in 1913.

The example of a Rotherham Blue Plaque shown above commemorates Donald Bailey, some of whose famous bridges in the war were made at the Park Gate Company.

THE NEXT MEETING IS ON:

Saturday 13th MAY 2023.

DAVE BURTON.

PARKGATE TO NEW ZEALAND 'FOR A BETTER LIFE'.

Member Dave Burton recounts a story of migration from Parkgate a century and more ago.



High Street Centre,
Rawmarsh.
Start ~ 2.30pm.
Entrance ~ £1 for members/£2 for Others.
Refreshments provided.
Chat Guaranteed.



A post-war photo of Stanley Street showing the railway at the end of the street with an active slag heap rising up behind. Life was hard here but the community was strong.

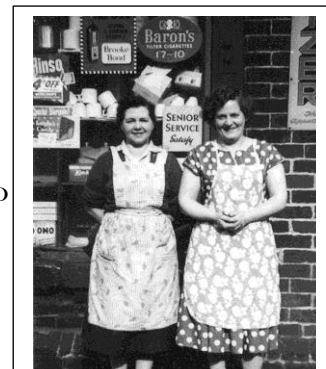
FOCUS ON LOCAL HISTORY.

Dave Smith ~ Growing Up on Stanley Street, Parkgate.

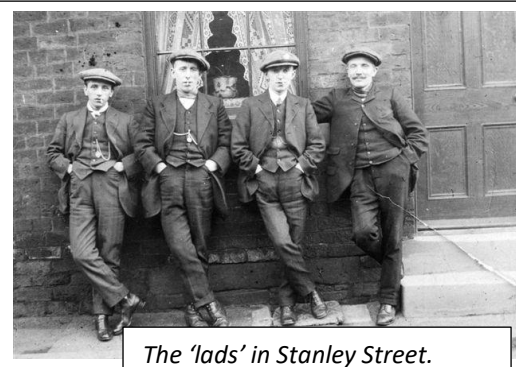
Look at this great photo of Dave Smith with three of his siblings and you will be very impressed by how smart they look, standing in front of their home in Stanley Street, but it may not tell the whole story. The smart clothes had probably been bought from a Littlewood's catalogue (17s 9d a week, and often in arrears) and were at the pawnbrokers after the weekend. Life was tough for his family with a Dad who was largely absent from home. When he did turn up he would send Dave up the street to pick up tab-ends. On his way he might walk past Toddy Price, a local bookie who looked like a 1930s gangster. All the children were sent out on the street by their Mum whenever possible and as a young lad Dave



thought that was great – freedom to roam! Freedom might involve lying your head on the railway lines as a train approached, for as long as you dared, or swimming in the local canal and getting oil on you with all those pretty colours. Everyone looked out for you, it was like having 20 aunties all on the same street. Up to Mrs Hamstead's to see if you could borrow 10 shillings for your Mum till Friday or to visit Mrs Sayers in the same yard to watch some 'tele' and perhaps getting a biscuit. The Brothertons ran the local shop and were so kind to many families and Dave was happy if he had an inch and a half of bread with a spread of Fussell's condensed milk and a sprinkling of sugar. Excitement might be seeing your first wet asphalt, used to replace broken paving, and breathing in that wonderful smell. Really big events might include leading a raid on Kenyons, KP nuts, on the far side of the canal and sailing there on a raft made of oil drums and wooden planks. Even more adventure when the raft sinks and you have to swim back across the canal in your clothes for a warm reception from your Mum! The memories of huge gob-stoppers that made your mouth go different colours and having one so long you had to put it in your dirty pocket to save it for tomorrow. Wildlife too – along Collier's Walk towards Aldwarke collecting newts in the huge puddles. Fame as well, Dave heard a film company were up in Lloyd Street giving out chocolate bars to kids playing football in the road. Went up there to see, even leaving the Low End as they went over the level crossing, but arrived too late. There was David O'Brien, Dougie Creamer, Graham Earnshaw and Walt Hutchinson – all Low Enders. Dave went to Rotherham Road School (now the Door Store) and fell under the spell of teacher, Miss Longden. He still remembers her with a passion and she even wore green eye-shadow... and he remembers! Imagine green eye-shadow in the Low End!



The Brothertons outside their shop.



The 'lads' in Stanley Street.

Just as many memories as Dave got into his teens and, of course, an extra interest in girls. Albert Sykes ran the Youth Club up at the Miners Institute on Broad Street. He warned Dave and his pals 'Don't step out of line or you will have to deal with me' and they didn't. They put lard on their hair, mixed with soot from the back of the fire and it set like granite. Not as smart as these 'toffs' from Stanley Street in the photo but not bad. No more cardboard in the shoes and holes in your jumpers. Dave might earn two shillings chopping sticks for Mrs Pepper next door and that was used for a night out. He got a Burton's suit as soon as he left Haugh Road School in 1958 – 25/- down and 5/- a week. Then it was dancing, off to the Baths

and further afield to the Carlton in Rotherham or the Embassy in Mexborough. Dave's Mum used to help out at Pardy's, serving drinks at the tables and plenty of 'buy one for yourself'. She had a good voice and she used to sing as she served, collecting change in her pinny while singing. Dave well remembers her red lipstick and rouge. Dave even tried some rouge on himself before one visit to the Youth Club.

Dave and his wife still go out rock-and-roll dancing even now so his tough beginning has done him no harm and he treasures the great memories he has of growing up in Sidney Street, such an all-embracing community.

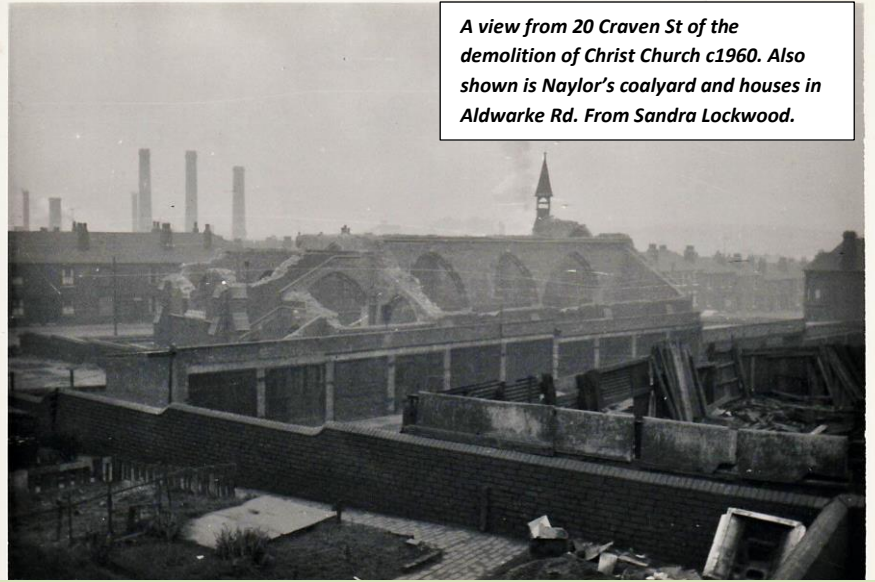


A crowd in Stanley Street.

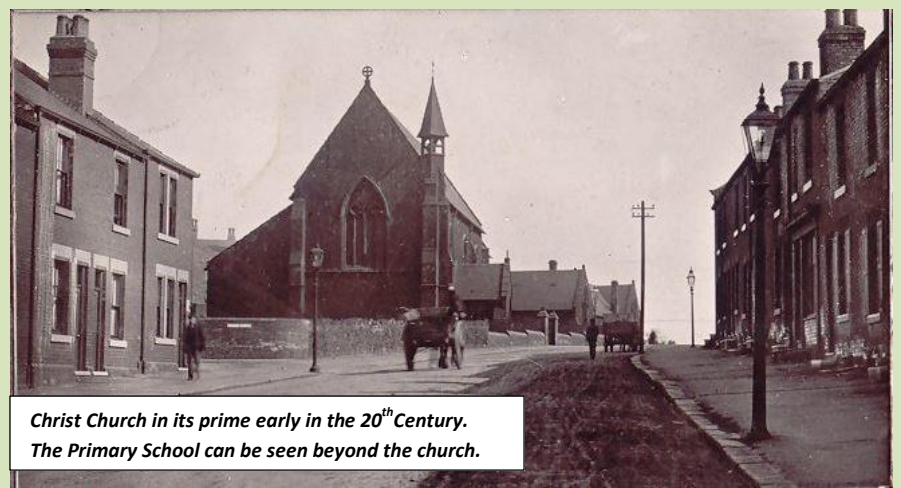
'Info' on the Photo Spots.

The first corner stone of Christ Church as laid by Viscountess Milton in 1867. It is interesting to note that this took place on 24th September. Just 5 days previously a foundation stone of a new Wesleyan chapel (at the end of Hollybush) had been laid by Mrs Hodgson. The battle between church and chapel was very active locally at this time! Christ Church was erected by subscription and consecrated in August 1868. It was built in the Early English style with a bell turret and one bell. There was seating for 650 participants. The living was in the gift of the Archbishop of York and with a yearly value of £350. This was initially held by Edward Wynne. The Lord Bishop of Ripon preached there in March 1869 while visiting at Aldwarke Hall. Charles Stoddart was the Vicar's Warden there in 1883. The Vicarage up Greasbrough Road (that still survives) cost £1500 to build. A War Memorial window was unveiled in the church by Earl Fitzwilliam on 20th February 1921. Parkgate seemed much better at organising the remembrance of the war dead than Rawmarsh. The church's football team played on a field behind the church at the end of 19th century (called Hill 30) when they won the Rotherham Charity Cup. The Cup, that cost 115 guineas, was said to be the second best in England. Christ Church closed in 1959/60 and its font was moved to St Nicholas Church, Rycroft.

PHOTO SPOTS.



A view from 20 Craven St of the demolition of Christ Church c1960. Also shown is Naylor's coalyard and houses in Aldwarke Rd. From Sandra Lockwood.



Christ Church in its prime early in the 20th Century. The Primary School can be seen beyond the church.



A photo from Betty Wright showing the interior of Christ Church. A war memorial window was unveiled by Earl Fitzwilliam on 20th February 1921.



PARKGATE BOWLER!

An historic hat brought to a recent exhibition. It was inscribed inside with the name of Lowe and Sons, Broad Street, Parkgate....



... Cor, that's posh!

ROSE LYNCH ~ANOTHER OF PARKGATE'S WOMEN OF STEEL.

Rose Lynch was born in October 1921 and brought up in Rotherham. She was one of the first 20 women to be employed at Parkgate Iron and Steel Co. in the Second World War. She died in May 2015 at the age of 93. In a retrospective diary she wrote: *'Women had to register either for the forces, Land Army or work in a factory. I was told there would gradually be about 1,000 women to work at Parkgate. I well remember the Monday I started, April 1941. We had to wear a boiler suit, bottle green; all women had to wear them and flat heel safety shoes. It all seemed very strange in those days to wear a boiler suit, you didn't see many women in long trousers. On the Monday morning we had to report to the lady personnel officer and three of us were taken to No. 1 mill. It did seem strange, all the men staring at us, being the first women in the mill. We were met by the manager who took us to where we were to work. We were given 6 weeks to learn the job. My first job was stamping steel billets and painting numbers on them. My first wage was 29/10p for 47 hours. Later I taught the job to other women who followed me. I moved onto another job – burning. There was a machine for burning... you could set it for different sizes. I used to burn them to the size that was wanted. I stayed at the mill until the war was over. I remember teaching women the job and they were receiving more money than me and it was because they were over 21. In those days it didn't matter if you did the job you just got a raise every birthday and full rate at 21. It seemed a little hard at the time but that was the rule.'*

ANOTHER TALE OF PARKGATE.

This wonderful film poster reminds us of another key event in the history of Parkgate and one that many local people over 70 will remember. Our speaker from the last meeting, Dave Smith, kindly allowed me to get this copy of the poster. Dave was one of many people who have personal stories of the filming in Parkgate. The 'turbulent Fiery background of steel', as it says on the poster, was provided by the Park Gate works and Steel, Peech and Tozer's works. This 1958 film stars Diana Dors, George Baker and Terence Morgan. It's reception at the time was



relatively lukewarm but more recently it seems to have gained a bit more artistic recognition. The 'gritty Northern surroundings' of glamorous stars like Diana Dors and George Baker is now more admired although the lack of authentic accents is a repeated criticism. Some of the film's steelworks scenes were shot at Steel, Peech and Tozer's but this fails to be recognised in most of the present-day's descriptions. Parkgate and Rawmarsh Station features prominently near the film's start, being renamed Rawborough in the film. Lloyd Street also gets 'big billing' early on with so many older people now claiming they were playing football there in the film I am surprised they could all fit! Whether Diana Dors actually ever came to Parkgate is a matter of dispute. What is sure is that within a year she was in Hollywood 'in the big time'.



Could this be the old Station Row near the Station Hotel?



George Baker hustling along Lloyd Street. Perhaps he didn't want to be hit by a football!



One for the steam train enthusiasts. The policeman is ensuring good behaviour amongst the natives!

WE HOPE TO ARRANGE TWO PUBLIC SHOWINGS OF 'TREAD SOFTLY STRANGER' IN THE LOCAL AREA DURING 2023 - THE YEAR OF PARKGATE 200.

A WHIT PARADE.

Plans are in place for some of the children at St Joseph's Primary School and Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary School to re-enact a traditional Whit Parade on Friday 15th June. For Safeguarding and Traffic reasons this will take place in Rosehill Park and with children dressed in Victorian-style clothing. Keep an eye out for further details.

