

THE DRUIDS' HALL
ITS SECRETS AND MYSTERIES

By

PETER BERRY

PREFACE

In 2007 I was asked to compile a short history of the Druids' Hall for inclusion in a programme to be produced for the one hundred and fiftieth year celebration of The Holme Valley Masonic Lodge. This in turn led me to write a history of the lodge from its formation in 1855 to the present day. Whilst carrying out this research it became apparent to me that no in depth account had been written about the Druids' Hall, and since I considered that the building was of some importance locally, I decided to undertake that task.

The history, as written by me, is in the form of a diary, that is to say the events recorded are in chronological order and have not been subdivided into chapters. It not only relates to the building and the people who have occupied it but also to the part it has played in the history of Holmfirth.

I have been fortunate in having at my disposal the deeds and records relating to the sale and purchase of the Druids' Hall and the land on which it is built, and I would like to thank Messrs Holroyd and Co. for their kind permission in allowing me to use extracts from them.

Much of the detail has been derived from contemporary entries found in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner, the Huddersfield Chronicle, the Huddersfield Daily Examiner, and other local papers and some photographs by curtesy of Bamforth and Co. The inventory details are from documents held by William Sykes and Son of Holmfirth, and to all of them I would like to offer my thanks for their permission to use them.



The Druids' Hall

THE DRUIDS' HALL

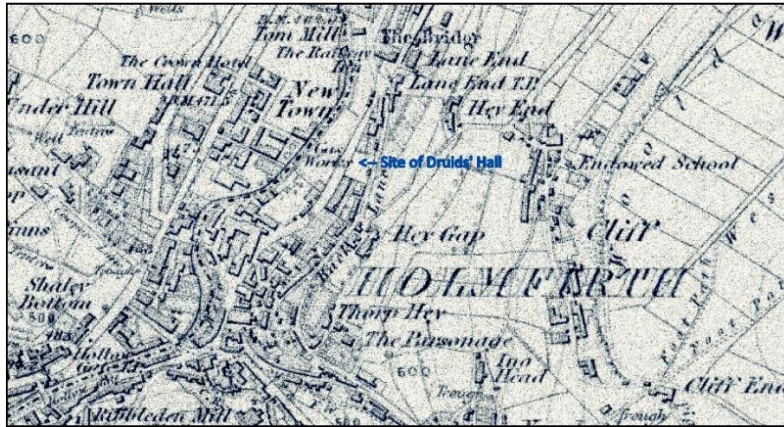
On or about the 22nd August 1804, James Harrop, a drysalter of Holmfirth, made a will which after various bequests left the bulk of his estate to his four sisters, Mary, the wife of James Hinchliff; Ann, the wife of William Hammerton; Sarah, the wife of Thomas Dransfield and Jane Wadsworth, by the description of Jane, the wife of John Kaye Wordsworth, surgeon and apothecary and their heirs.

It was agreed that the estate, which was reasonably large was to be divided equally between his four sisters. Part of the estate which was to be Jane Wordsworth's legacy was a leasehold parcel of land or ground of 1078 square yards (more or less) and certain closes called Haigh Croft and Plumpton and was situated near Holmfirth, bounded eastwardly by the Highway, westwardly by the Greenfield and Shepley Lane Head Turnpike Road, northerly by gardens belonging to Richard Boothroyd and southerly by other parts of the closes called Haigh Croft and Plumpton. This was to be the future site of the Druids' Hall.

Following the death of her husband John in 1805, Jane Wordsworth continued to hold the leasehold until the twenty-sixth of October 1836 when she sold the land to Jonathan Thorp, a stonemason, of Bank End, Wooldale, for £193.2.10d. She died two years later on the 17th October 1838 aged seventy-six.

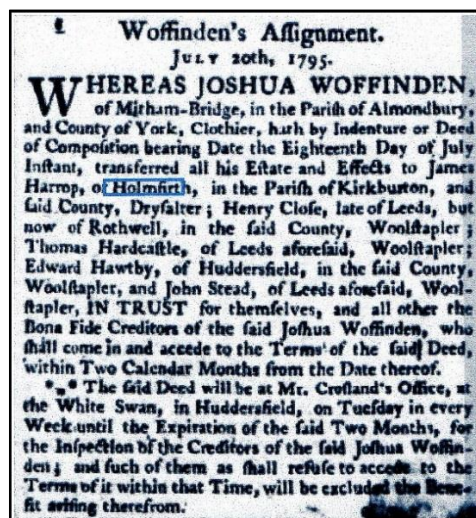
The adjoining portion of the land or closes called Haigh Croft and Plumpton had previously been the property of Joseph Crawshaw and Benjamin Beeley but this was later to be owned jointly by Jonathan Thorp's and his wife Mary.

On the 27th May 1846 at Holmfirth Great Court Baron, Jonathan Thorp and his wife surrendered the lease for the land, premises, and appurtenances appertaining to those held by them, into the hands of the Lord of the Manor of Wakefield to be transferred to Joseph Heeley, Job Dearnley, John Dearnley, Jonathan Hinchliff, Abel Thorpe (of Hey Gap), Francis Sanderson, Henry Wadsworth, Abel Thorpe (of Stake Lane), Jonathan Shore, Joseph Hinchliff, William Sanderson, Jonas Dearnley, Eli Roberts, John Hirst, William Walton, Christopher Holmes, William Hirst, Simeon Fallas, James Moorhouse, William Greaves and Benjamin Rollinson and others, all trustees of The Ancient Order of the Druids, Lodge No. 150 for the sum of £190.0.0. The ground rent, which was paid to the Lord of the Manor was at that time 2d per annum.



Proposed site of Druids' Hall located on map of Holmfirth in 1850

The first reference to James Harrop, the original owner of the land on which the Druids' Hall was later to be built, appeared in the Leeds Intelligencer on Monday, the 3rd August 1795 when all the Estate and Effects of Joshua Woffinden were transferred, in trust for themselves, to the said James Harrop, of Holmfirth, Henry Close, late of Leeds, but now of Rothwell, Thomas Hardcastle, of Leeds, Edward Hawthby, of Huddersfield and John Stead, of Leeds. It is not clear however from the advertisement whether or not this land was included in the transfer but it is thought to be unlikely.



26th Oct 1856
 Helme
 M^r Jane Wordsworth }
 To }
 M^r Sam^l Thorp }
 S^d 2
 Court Sur 12
 Copy 12
 Duty 1-2-6
 Fine 6
 Seal 1-4
 Thro'g Record of Act 6-6
 S^d 2-14-10

Front of Deeds relating to sale of land by Jane Wordsworth to Jonathan Thorp

Helmsfirth Great Court Baron of His Grace the most noble
 George William Frederick Duke of Leeds Knight of the most noble order of the Garter Lord
 of the Manor of Markfield holden there by adjournment the twenty sixth day of October
 in the seventh year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord William the fourth by the Grace of God
 King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and so forth in the year of our
 Lord 1856
 At this Court it was witnessed upon the oath of William Stephenson
 Gentleman a customary tenant of the Lord that for and in consideration of the sum of
 one hundred and ninety three pounds two Shillings and two pence of lawful money
 current in England to Jane Wordsworth of Thro'p in Woldale in the parish of Markham
 in the County of York Widow in hand well and truly paid Jonathan Thorp of Markham
 Lord in Woldale of and for the use of the said Jane Wordsworth with herby acquit release
 and discharge the said Jonathan Thorp his heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns
 by these presents And also in consideration of the Sum of Ten Shillings of like lawful
 money as aforesaid to Jonathan William Hobart of Farnley Tyas in the parish of

Part of Deeds relating to sale of land by Jane Wordsworth to Jonathan Thorp in
 1836

The land was sold (as was recorded at the time);

‘With the view and intent that there should be erected thereon a hall or meeting room and other buildings for a certain Lodge or Society of persons established at Holmfirth and called The Ancient Order of the Druids, Lodge 150 and that the aforesaid sum of £190 purchase money and the requisite funds for erecting such Hall or Meeting room and other buildings should be raised in manner thereafter mentioned.’

The Ancient Order of the Druids, Lodge 150 was one of many philanthropic societies formed, both in Holmfirth and many other parts of the country in the early to middle Victorian era, and in 1851 it was one of twenty-one lodges of the United Order of Druids in the Huddersfield district. Its purpose was to give financial aid and support to its members in times of need.

Membership was open to anyone over the age of eighteen and was subject to a satisfactory ballot, and approval by at least two thirds of the members present at one of their meetings. This was followed by a period of one month prior to the candidate’s initiation to allow the members of the lodge time to enquire into the character and qualifications of the applicant. The rules of the organization in 1886 stated that;

‘Any person wishing to become a member of this lodge, if from eighteen to twenty-four years of age, shall send his name, age, occupation, and place of abode in full, together with the sum of two shillings and sixpence, as proposition money, and shall be initiated on the next or some following lodge-night within three months, or forfeit the proposition money, unless a just reason can be given why he has not been initiated. The proposition money shall be paid immediately upon his election by the proposer or seconder, and two shillings and sixpence after his initiation, but if more than twenty-four years of age, he shall send his register before his initiation, and shall pay according to the following scale:-

	Age	s.	d.	Age	s.	d.
From	18 – 24	5	0	32 – 36	15	0
“	24 – 28	7	6	36 – 38	17	6
“	28 – 32	10	0	38 – 40	20	0

Briton’s Pride Lodge 150 was founded in 1831 although the first reference to it was discovered in the Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser when on Saturday the 15th September 1838, it was recorded that;

‘On Monday last the Briton’s Pride Lodge, No. 150, held their anniversary at the house of Mr John Boothroyd, the Rose and Crown Inn, Holmfirth. The members and their friends, accompanied with a band of music, walked in procession through several of the neighbouring villages, and then returned to the Rose and Crown Inn, and sat down to an excellent dinner. After the cloth was withdrawn the lodge was opened for the admission of all parties, and the company was highly entertained with songs and glees until a late hour, when they separated in harmony, peace and joy.’

Two years later, on Saturday the 4th July 1840, they reported the anniversary of the lodge once again;

‘ANCIENT DRUIDS. - On Monday last, June 29th, the members and friends of Briton’s Pride Lodge, No. 150, of Ancient Druids, held their anniversary at the Rose and Crown Inn, Holmfirth, where they formed a procession, and walked to Holmbridge Church, when an eloquent and impressive sermon was delivered by the Rev. W. Woodland, and a collection made in aid of the Sunday School about to be established at that place. After the sermon, they walked in procession to the Rose and Crown Inn, when upwards of about 160 partook of an excellent dinner, provided for the occasion.’

The Briton’s Pride Lodge No. 150 was the largest and most rapidly expanding Order of Druids in the Holme Valley, having increased its membership from approximately one hundred and sixty in 1840 to about two hundred and sixty in 1847 and to almost four hundred by 1855.

It was seven years before a further anniversary celebration was reported, on this occasion by the Leeds Times. The event was recorded as follows;

‘SECRET ORDERS’

‘Ancient Order of Druids,- On Monday last, the members of the Briton’s Pride Lodge, No.150, of the above order, held their anniversary at the house of Mr George Higgins, the Rose and Crown Inn, Holmfirth. As early as nine o’clock in the morning, the secretary and other officers were in attendance distributing tickets to the members, and transacting other business until eleven o’clock, when a peal from the church bells announced the time for divine service. An eloquent and appropriate sermon was delivered by the Rev. R.E. Leach, the incumbent of Holmfirth. After divine service, the members returned to the Rose and Crown Inn, when 260 of them sat down to an excellent dinner, served up in good style. The

annual report of the past year was read, and showed the society to be in a very flourishing and prosperous condition.'

Whilst the principal aim of the Druids was to support their members in times of need social events also played an important part in their lives. Some took the form of tea parties, one of which was documented as being held for the members of Lodge No. 150, of the Ancient order of the Druids at Holmfirth in their lodge room at the Rose and Crown Inn on the 11th October 1847, 'when upwards of 260, wives, sweethearts, and friends of the members were regaled with an excellent tea.'



*Rose and Crown Inn
Meeting Place of Briton's Pride Lodge No.150 until 1847*

It must be presumed that by now the membership of the lodge had increased to such an extent that the Rose and Crown Inn, (now known locally as The Nook) could no longer provide the accommodation required to cater for this increase in number and that a change of venue was becoming necessary, as the following year on Saturday, the 1st July 1848, a change of venue was announced in the Leeds Intelligencer;

'ANCIENT ORDER OF DRUIDS, - On Monday last the lodge No. 150 of the A.O.D. in the Huddersfield District, celebrated their anniversary at the Crown Hotel, Holmfirth. The brethren to the number of 200, formed in procession, and preceded by an excellent band of music, paraded through Holmfirth, New Mill, Scholes, Holme and several other villages in the vicinity, and afterwards returned to the Crown, where a bountiful banquet had been provided, and to which about 300 of the brethren sat down, and did it ample justice. Great praise was given to Mr. and Mrs. McDonald, the worthy host and hostess, for the splendid and liberal manner in which they had provided for their numerous guests. After the removal of the cloth, the chair was taken by Brother Mark Bailey, M.N.G. An excellent party of glee singers having been engaged for the occasion, some of the most popular songs, glees, duets, etc., were sung in capital style. The evening was spent in a very harmonious and satisfactory manner.'

The Leeds Times wrote of the occasion;

'ANCIENT ORDER OF DRUIDS. - On Monday last, the members and friends connected with this valuable institution, the Briton's Pride Lodge, No. 150, held their anniversary at the house of Mr. M'Donald (sic), Crown Hotel, Holmfirth, when upwards of 260 members sat down to an excellent dinner, provided by the worthy host; after which they were gratified by a party of glee singers and other musicians until a late hour, when they separated highly delighted with the evening's entertainment.'

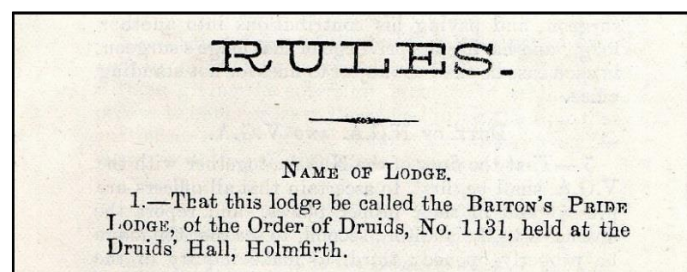
This proved to be yet another temporary move, as by this time the Druids had already purchased land near Lane End, and were contemplating the building of a purpose built hall to accommodate their increasing membership, although it was to be another three years before building commenced.

However, for the moment The Briton's Pride Lodge No. 150 continued to use the Crown Hotel for its meetings, but for some unknown reason the newspapers of the period were now referring to it as Briton's Pride Lodge No. 346. The Huddersfield Chronicle was the first newspaper to make this reference when on the 25th June 1850 they reported that;

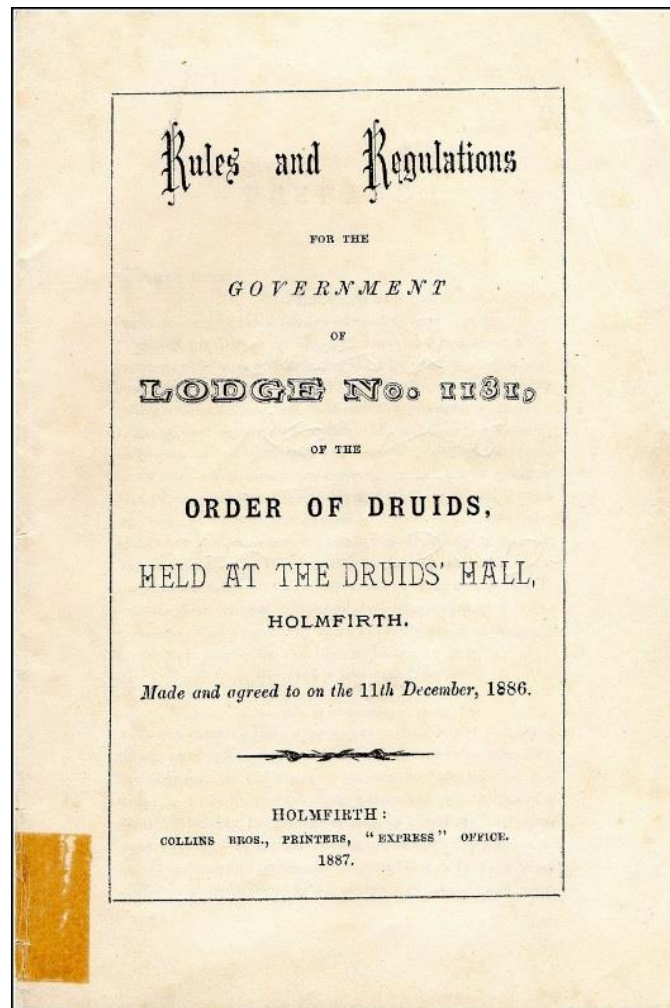
'On Monday last, the lodge No. 346 U.A.O.D. to the number of 330 members "held high festival" by dining together- being the anniversary- at the Crown Hotel. A sumptuous and most substantial repast was provided by "mine host" for the occasion, and full justice was done to the viands. An adjournment took place to the Town Hall, where "the social glass" went merrily, though moderately, round. Music too, with songs and glees, lent charm to the scene; and a very pleasant evening was thus prolonged until the midnight hour scared each and all to their respective homes.'

The explanation as to why the Lodge's number should have changed is unclear, but in and about 1850 there was a large split in the membership of The United Order of Ancient Druids caused principally, by the feeling of some, that power should be centralised in one Imperial Grand Lodge to be based in London, and as a consequence some lodges considered forming themselves into friendly societies which they felt would provide their members with guaranteed financial security. Many lodges, particularly those in the North of England disapproved of this centralisation which they felt lacked democracy and also had a London bias. They also wished to keep their financial independence. The breakaway Druidic order being formed was called the 'Royal Order of Modern Druids' and their aim was; *'to afford to the labouring classes easy means by which they may make pecuniary preparation against the contingency of sickness and the time of death, without being dependent on the hand of charity.'*

It is unlikely that the Briton's Pride Lodge was one of this breakaway organisation, but the movement of other lodges to this new order may have necessitated the re-numbering of existing lodges. Nevertheless all future references to the Briton's Pride Lodge continued to describe it as being a member of 'The United Order of Ancient Druids' with the exception of one entry made in the Huddersfield Chronicle on the 5th June 1852, when at the opening of the Druids' Hall it was referred to as 'The Royal Order of Modern Druids, Lodge No. 346.'




This number was to change once again and it was recorded in their book of 'Rules and Regulations' in 1886, 'That this lodge be called the Briton's Pride Lodge, of the Order of Druids. No. 1131, held at the Druids' Hall, Holmfirth,' so that by 1886 it had been described as Lodge no. 150, 346 and 1131.



*Front Piece of Rules and Regulations of the Order of Druids No.1131,
Previously known as Briton's Pride Lodge Nos. 150 and 346*

The Crown Hotel used by the Briton's Pride Lodge was, during this period, adequate for the society's needs, and the hotel was regarded by them as being both respectable and capable of providing the necessary space to accommodate its members. James W. McDonald, the landlord of the Crown Hotel placed the following advertisement in the Huddersfield Chronicle in September and October of 1850 which amply describes the facilities available at the hotel.



CROWN HOTEL, HOLMFIRTH.

JAMES W. MACDONALD begs to return his thanks to the Inhabitants of Holmfirth, and the Public generally, for the very liberal support he has enjoyed since he opened the above Hotel, and takes this opportunity of assuring them that the house has been most beautifully fitted up, re-painted, &c., and will be found by Commercial Gentlemen especially, to combine the elegance and comfort of home with a close proximity to the Railway, being within about three minutes' walk of the station.

J. W. M. has selected a first-rate stock of Wines, Spirits, Ales, &c., and hopes, by the strictest attention to the requirements and comfort of his friends, to obtain a continuance of their patronage and support. In addition to the usual apartments of the Hotel there is a

LARGE AND COMMODIOUS ROOM,
suitable for Estate and general Auction Sales.

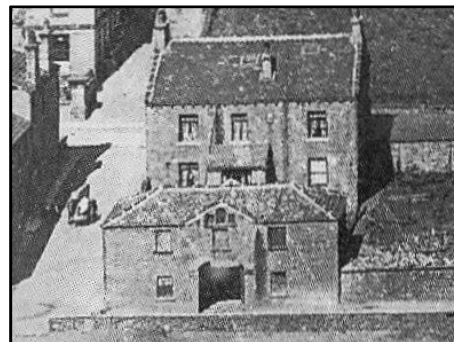
WELL-AIRED BEDS.

An elegant One or Two-Horse CAB ready at the shortest notice.

J. W. M. has great pleasure in intimating that a GLEE CLUB, of superior talent, is being established at the Hotel.

N.B.—For the convenience of Private Families, J. W. M. has also ensured a constant supply of ALE and PORTER, in small casks, from the Lockwood Brewery, at the following prices—

ALE, 6 gallons and upwards, 1s. 1s. 2d. and 1s. 6d. per gal.
PORTER, ditto, 1s. 2d. and 1s. 6d. per gal.



Front and rear of Crown Hotel, meeting place of Briton's Pride Lodge from 1848 until 1852 showing old coach house, stables and archway into courtyard at rear

However as the membership of the lodge increased, difficulty was beginning to be experienced caused by the limited accommodation available, and having purchased land in 1846, and work having already begun to clear the site for a purpose built hall, it was only a matter of time before lodge moved premises again.

It has been widely accepted and recorded that the Druids' Hall was built in 1846, this however was not the case, for whilst the land on which to build the Hall was purchased in 1846, the erection of the building did not commence until 1851.

This article printed on the 9th March 1850, in the Leeds Intelligencer clarifies this;

'THE AGE OF PROGRESS;

Old adages are generally figuratively true – now and again, literally so. “It never rains but it pours is ever on our lips, and so it is. In this neighbourhood, occasionally for a year or two together we seem most to slumber – nay, truly to stand still. Not a simple new erection of any importance greets the eye – public enterprise seems grown lethargic – and the traveller remarks, after twelve months absence, “Really, Holmfirth looks now precisely what it was when I last visited it.” But “a change comes o’er the spirit of the dream” – a spacious Town Hall rears its princely crest; an entire new range of splendid shops startles the visitor with its dazzling uniformity; and straightway behold! A railroad penetrating into the midst of us. What succeeds? Old cottages stuccoed, beautified, revived, and metamorphosed into pretty habitations, front the railway station, and lend a charm to its very monotony. A few yards further on, handsome residences, in course of erection, already peep above the surface, destined before the summer’s dawn to embellish that particular section of the town. And, occupying a prominent niche between these and the station, a stately Druids’ Hall is on the eve of building. This, indeed, has long been contemplated by the “Briton’s Pride” Lodge, at Holmfirth, a numerous section of a very respectable and important body. On their last lodge night, it was decided that a large and suitable building for lodge business, and also for the use of the public, should be at once commenced – the ground being already excavated and ready for operations – and the funds for building should be raised in shares amongst the members. Considerable difference of opinion, however, exists amongst them as to whether the erection should be a “Druids’ Hotel” or a “Druids’ Hall” without the “Hotel.”

Clearly some further delay occurred, probably concerning the finance required, as it was not until the 12th April 1851 that it was noted in the Leeds Times;

‘DRUIDS’ HALL. – The foundation stone of the Druids’ Hall, about to be erected at Holmfirth, was laid yesterday week. The design is beautiful, and when completed the Hall will be an ornament to the village and an honour to the proprietors.’

By late 1851 the Druids' Hall was almost complete and on the 20th December its progress and the state of the surrounding area was reported in some detail in the Huddersfield Chronicle. They wrote;

'SIGNS OF PROGRESS. – Masons' mallets, chisels, trowels, and other implements of toil are continually ringing with a stunning effect in the ears of the people of Holmfirth and the neighbourhood, and to their practical music new buildings are springing up on every hand. The railway terminus at Lane-end bids fair to be to Holmfirth what the sun is to trees and plants, namely a source of life and health. The branches of plants naturally turn towards the sun, so the town is spreading and expanding towards the railway station, and that too at such a rate as to astonish the beholder. Building ground in that direction has increased and will continue to increase in value, and the owners and occupiers thereof are calculating that the gradual development of the town in this direction will be a source of wealth to them without any increased effort on their part, and we have no doubt that many are blessing their stars that they were born to so fortunate a destiny.

A public-house on a very imposing scale is fast towering towards the clouds on the site of the Old Railway Inn, but with that name the new building will not be content. It is to be styled with the more imposing one of "Victoria Hotel." Not far distant, and nearly completed, the Druids' Hotel lifts its crested head, and ere long will be appealing to the public for its share of patronage. The top room in this building is being fitted up for public meeting, and although not so large as the Town Hall, is quite large enough for most public purposes in Holmfirth. The entrance will be by a winding staircase. The large room is about fifteen yards long, by about nine wide. A great improvement has lately been made in the road from the post-office up to Lane-end toll-gate, in as much as the causeway for the whole length has been flagged. We hope the causeways in the other parts of town will undergo a similar operation. The whole of them want attending to; such as have been flagged are out of repair; others want widening; and we may observe further, that the roads in general are in such a state that in wet weather it is impossible to get to any part of the town without having to wade up to the ancles (sic) almost in mud.'

On the night of the 5th February 1852 disaster struck the Holme Valley when the embankment of the Bilberry reservoir collapsed resulting in the great flood of Holmfirth. Fortunately by virtue of its position, being situated on rising ground, it escaped the devastation which occurred locally. The Druids, however, were to play a very important role in the identification of many of the bodies found locally, a great portion of the dead being members or family members of the various local societies, and it was to their credit that they sought out the survivors and immediately paid them the sum due to cover the funeral cost etc.

By the beginning of April 1852 the building was virtually complete, and on Saturday 10th April 1852 its expected opening was reported in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner;

'DRUIDS' HALL, - This building, the property of the society of Druids at Holmfirth, is fast drawing towards completion. The design of the building is good, and being erected on the rising ground near the railway, at Lane End, commands an extensive view of the surrounding scenery. The building, which is intended for public purposes, is commodious, and neatly finished. We understand it will shortly be opened.'

Surprisingly, considering the amount of damage sustained, both in the town of Holmfirth and the surrounding area the building was able to host, two days before its official opening, what proved to be the first concert to be held in the Druids' Hall. However this was the weekend of the Holmfirth May Fair, and in view of the conditions to be found in the village following the flood it was perhaps held with a view to raising the spirits of the local inhabitants. The Leeds Intelligencer reported;

'Symptomatic of the local depression and inertness consequent upon the flood, little animation was manifested in business transactions at this fair on Saturday last, and few sales were effected. One redeeming feature in the evening "pleasure fair", however, was brought out in the shape of a concert at the Druids' Hall. This structure is a most convenient building, recently erected, near the railway station, possessing a large room, well ventilated, well lighted, and possessing every requisite for public assemblies – in which a musical treat was afforded to a numerous company by the performances of the "Lancashire Bell-ringers," interspersed by the well-executed airs of a quadrille band, formed principally by musicians from Hepworth. The evening was thus very pleasantly spent: the accommodation of the new building was unmistakeably illustrated: and one glimpse of sunshine thus irradiated the miserably-black horizon of Holmfirth fair-day.'

A further account of the concert also appeared in the Huddersfield Chronicle and also in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner whose report read as follows;

'CONCERT. – The Lancashire hand bell-ringers, in combination with the Hepworth Quadrille Band, gave a grand musical entertainment, in the large room of the recently erected Druids' Hall, on Saturday evening last. The programme consisted of a selection of favourite airs, duets, songs, quadrilles, etc., from eminent composers, all of which were executed in an admirable manner and elicited

frequent rounds of applause. It being the first concert held in the room, we were highly delighted with the pleasing effect produced; the sound was equally distinct, effective and harmonious in every part; this undoubtedly is a superior advantage in a public building rarely met with, and which will ere long, be duly appreciated by the inhabitants. All the performers ably acquitted themselves on the occasion. The Hepworth Quadrille Band has considerably improved since we heard it before. The audience was not so large as we anticipated, but all present appeared highly gratified with the treat. '

No doubt the lack of numbers present, both at the fair and in the hall, was due in some degree to the dreadful state of Holmfirth caused by the flood, which was still much in evidence three months later.

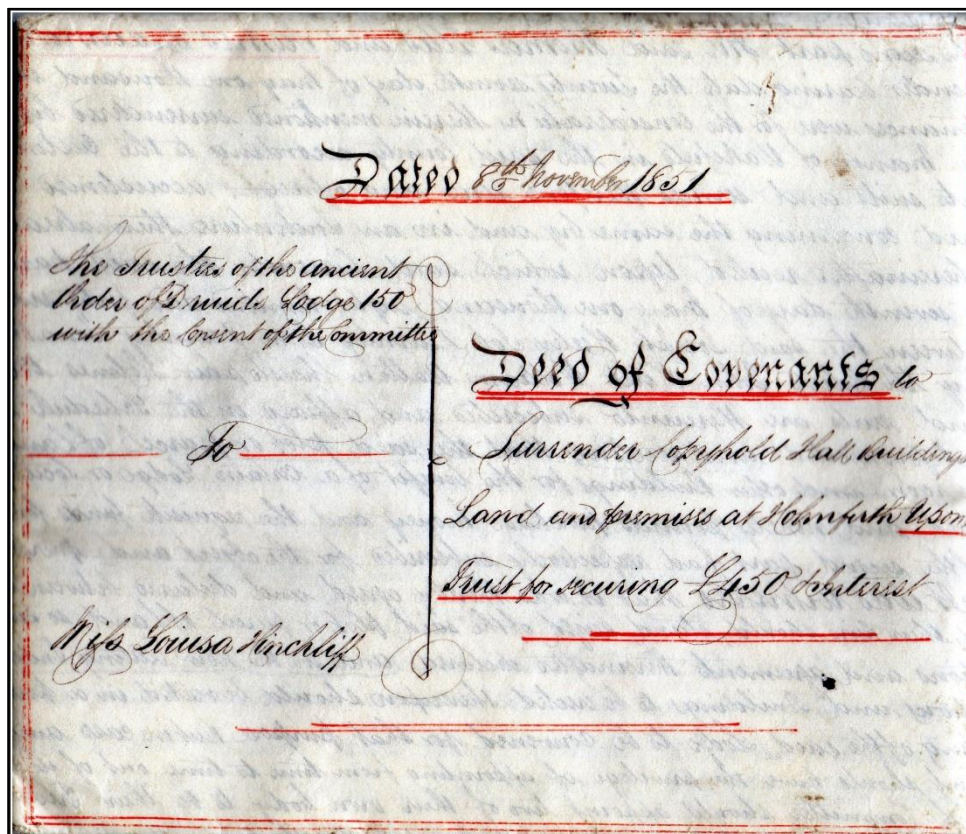
At long last the Druids' Hall was complete and ready for use and the first indication that it was to be opened officially appeared in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner on Saturday, the 29th May 1852 when it was reported that;

'DRUIDS' HALL, - This elegant building, erected near the railway station at Holmfirth, and the property of the society of Druids, is now complete, and being situate on the rising ground in a central part of the village, commands an extensive view of the surrounding country. We understand the building will be opened on Whit-Monday, on which occasion a large gathering of the members in the Huddersfield district is anticipated. The Rev. David James, of Liverpool, and other friends belonging to the order, are expected on the occasion. The building will be appropriated to public purposes, for which it is well adapted. '

There has always been an air of mystery regarding the source of the money required to erect such a palatial building. It has often been assumed that certain members of the Order had donated various sums of money towards its cost, which was said to be in the region of £1800.00 to £2000.00, a vast amount in those days.

However it was later reported that members of Briton's Pride Lodge, and other lodges wishing to use the premises, had purchased individual shares of £1.0.0 each, which in the event proved insufficient, as on the 8th of November 1851 when the Hall was near completion, the building and land were mortgaged and a further £450.0.0 was borrowed, permission having been granted by the thirty trustees of Lodge 150. This loan was paid to the two Treasurers of the Lodge, Thomas Ellis of Yew Tree in Austonley, and James Beaumont of Underbank in Wooldale, *'on mortgage of the said parcel of land and the said hall and other buildings'* by Louisa Hinchliff, a spinster, of Lane Cottage, Upperthong.

The interest was to be, as shown in Deeds of Covenant, 'four pounds and five shillings per centum per annum.' and in the event of the lodge defaulting on payment the land and building etc. was to be forfeited to Louisa Hinchliff.



Front of Deed of Covenants for loan of £450.0.0 plus interest made by Louisa Hinchliff to Briton's Pride Lodge No. 150 in 1851.

Joseph	Heeley	Jonathan	Shore
John	Dearnley	Joseph	Hinchliff
John	Dearnley	William	Sanderson
Jonathan	Hinchliff	Thomas	Dearnley
Abel	Wife of Lake Lane	Eli	Roberts
Francis	Sanderson	John	Hirst
Henry	Widgott	William	Walton
Abel	Thorp	Christopher	Holmes
of the Gap			

John	Heeley	John	Sanderson
George	Hirst	George	Hirst
Thomas	Eli	Thomas	Eli
James	Beaumont	James	Beaumont
Jonathan	Roberts	Jonathan	Roberts
John	Hirst	John	Hirst
James	Walton	James	Walton
Christopher	Holmes	Christopher	Holmes

Names of signatories on Deeds of Covenant dated 8th November 1851
Note that both John Dearnley and William Hirst have signed deeds with a cross.

Received the day and year first within
written of and from the within named
Louisa Hinchliff the sum of four hundred
and fifty pounds being the full consideration
money within expressed to be paid by her to
us As witnesses our hands Thomas Hirst

Witness
Geo. Lawton James Beaumont

450

Receipt on Deeds of Covenant for loan of £450.0.0

Louisa Hinchliff, who was thirty-two years old and obviously a woman of some substance lived with her widowed father Joseph, a retired merchant and their general servant Mary Ann Creswick, and why the money should have been borrowed from her and not her father also remains something of a mystery. Her loan, plus the interest, which finally amounted to £459.11.3p was repaid to her on the 10th November 1873 and the lease reverted back to the trustees of the Ancient Order of the Druids, Lodge No.150.

The building was now ready for occupation and with great pomp and circumstance was officially opened to the public on Whit-Monday, the 31st May, 1852.

The opening ceremony was described in great length in an article which appeared in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner on Saturday, the 5th June 1852. It also helped to clarify many of the questions previously referred to regarding the financing of the project.

‘OPENING OF THE DRUIDS’ HALL’

‘This commodious and substantial building, the progress of which we have several times noticed during its erection, and which affords another striking illustration of what may be accomplished by the united efforts of a few working men, was finally opened to the public on Whit-Monday.

On the occasion a general gathering of the members belonging to the various lodges in the Huddersfield district took place at the Crown Hotel. The weather in the fore-part of the day was gloomy and threatened rain, but by the time of the procession starting, the clouds had disappeared, and ever and anon the sun put forth its golden beams, as if about to smile upon the approaching scene.

At three o’clock in the afternoon, the procession started from the Crown Hotel, headed by the Holmfirth Temperance Brass Band, in full uniform, the members of the lodges also wearing the full insignia of the order, and proceeded through the neighbourhood, by way of Scholes to Wooldale, and from thence to the Hall, which was tastefully decorated with flowers and evergreens suitable for the occasion.

At seven o’clock a public meeting was held in the hall. Upon the platform we observed several of the clergy and principal manufacturers in the neighbourhood, amongst whom were the Revs. R.E. Leach and Marshall, Rev. D. James, of Liverpool; J. Moorhouse Esq., J.P., Messrs. Hinchliff, Crawshaw, G. and W. Thewlis, Ramsden, Crosland, and Wimpenny. The chair was ably occupied on the occasion by Mr. Edward Crosland, of Huddersfield, the district secretary.

The CHAIRMAN then rose, and addressed the assembled brethren as follows: -

Brother Druids, I would much rather your selection of a chairman had fallen upon someone better calculated to do justice to your motives on the present occasion

than the humble individual now before you. However, having accepted the honour, I must endeavour to acquit myself to the best of my ability, relying on your indulgence if they are not so represented as you could desire. Gentleman, I am given to understand that the primary cause of Lodge 346 of the United Ancient Order of Druids commencing the magnificent building which now o'er-canopies our heads was the difficulty the members thereof found in obtaining a room commodious enough to accommodate its increasing numbers, which have more than doubled in a period of nine years. To the later I can bear ample testimony, being secretary for the Huddersfield district, of which the lodge is a component part, and I find that their return to the district was, in the year 1843, 140 financial members, while in the present year they have returned 341 financial members. Therefore I think everyone present will admit that, for comfort and convenience of a society so numerous, a very large room must be necessary to contain all who are desirous (every financial member having the privilege) of taking part in the framing of the laws and regulations which are to govern them, - such a one as only their exertions could supply, when you are told that many of them are total abstainers from all intoxicating beverages, consequently thinking men, and while holding their meeting under landlord sufferance could not, to say the least, meet with that courtesy which they could under a building erected by themselves and for their own purposes. Such being the case, they resolved to provide a remedy, the result of which is the erection of the present Druids' Hall, the cost of which is, for purpose of land and building, altogether £1400, - £300 of which is vested in individual shares of £1 each; the remainder is the property of the lodge. By this outlay the members calculate on having obtained a two-fold object, - namely, increased comfort and convenience to themselves, and by letting the two wings as dwellings, the centre as a public-house, and the room where we are now assembled on reasonable terms for public purposes, beside their own meetings, they hope to realise a better interest on their capital than they have been receiving from the bank.

Brothers of lodge 346, allow me to congratulate you upon your enterprise, and wish you every success, for I believe it is one of the greatest undertakings ever attempted by a single lodge either in this or any other order; and it is another proof of the power of perseverance and unity, when directed by intelligence and honesty of purpose - like the river Nile, which, though it commences in small rivulets, yet, ere it empties itself into the ocean, becomes a great river; so you, by joining your small resources, have been able to erect this beautiful building, an honour to yourselves and an ornament to the neighbourhood.

Gentleman, I cannot sit down without expressing my conviction that whenever a man becomes connected with this, or any other society having similar objects in view, it is a sure stepping stone to his moral and intellectual elevation. If he will

only take an active part in the duties of the order, sympathy is engendered in his bosom for the afflicted; vigour is added to his energies in subscribing to their relief, knowing it is a reciprocity of charity which will be returned by the fraternity, should he ever want it; making him a better business man from a knowledge of financial affairs, and a wiser man from the lessons of philanthropy he there receives. I am happy to see so many of the middle class gentlemen amongst us today, and should be happier still to see them enrolled under the banner of the United Ancient Order of Druids, if it was only as honorary members that we might have the benefit of their counsel.

This, and the contemporaneous societies, I consider the noble and middle classes ought to patronise more than they do, for I am persuaded they would ultimately find a benefit thereby in diminished poor-rates and pauper burials, for, I am proud to say, a good member of the U.A.O.D. was never yet brought to be a burden on the parish; and the example and support of the noble and middle classes would be the means of influencing thousand to enlist under its standard. To the young members of lodge 346 I would say that this is an important era. Your predecessors have, as it were, bequeathed the Druids' Hall as your legacy, and on your good husbanding and exertion depends whether you hand it unimpaired to posterity.

Let me enforce on your minds that we live in an age when to be young and indifferent are no longer synonymous. The claims of the future are represented by the progress of the present, and the youth of society are its trustees for posterity.

Gentlemen I will not detain longer, as there are others to address you, and some whom I know you are anxious to hear, - the Rev. R. D. James, of Liverpool, and the Rev. R.E. Leach of Holmfirth, your much esteemed and respected friends; and I shall conclude with declaring the Druids' Hall now open, and calling upon the band to play the National Anthem, for the Druids are loyal subjects, though political questions are prohibited discussion in their lodges.

After the National Anthem by the band, the Rev R.E. Leach, was called upon, and received with applause. In an eloquent speech he said, he would bear his humble testimony to the character of the Druids for uprightness and decent demeanour in their proceedings, having had nearly twenty years' experience among them; he then alluded to the privileges and advantages derived from such societies, especially to the working classes, in preventing them from becoming chargeable to the parish, and concluded by wishing them prosperity and success.

Mr. S. Wimpenny was next introduced: he said he was sorry he could not address them by the name of brother, not being a member; he however was glad that such a noble and magnificent building as the one they occupied had been raised; it was creditable to the members, and furnished another instance of what could be done by the united efforts of the working classes. He then entered largely into the

advantages to be derived from provident societies, and concluded by encouraging all present to enter them.

The Rev. D. James on presenting himself was received with applause, and after expressing his great gratification on being present upon so interesting occasion, proceeded, in eloquent language, to give a comparison of the names of the various secret orders, showing very successfully that for antiquity, and sublime and religious associations, the Druids stood second to none, but far surpassed many others. He then proceeded to show that the Druidical religion was the patriarchal religion of this country, giving a very eloquent description of Druidical worship, and concluded by a powerful appeal to all present to embrace the gospel of Christ. The meeting was subsequently addressed by Joseph Moorhouse, Esq., J.P.; Messrs. Wm. Hinchliffe, George Thewlis, Robert Ramsden, and J. Crawshaw.

Thanks were afterwards awarded to the chairman, the speakers, and the musicians, which were responded to.

At intervals the band played several favourite pieces of music, which received great applause, the meeting concluded by the band playing the One Hundredth Psalm.

Thus concluded the interesting proceedings connected with the opening of another public room, in which, in days to come, we hope the lessons of self-culture, self-reliance, and a wise economy, will often be taught to the inhabitants of Holmfirth, and thereby give cause to the promoters of this Hall to rejoice in having furnished the public with a building dedicated to the noblest objects – the elevation and increased happiness of man.'

Other similar but shorter reports printed in the Huddersfield Chronicle and Leeds Intelligencer added that the room was capable of holding 500 or 600 people and that - 'it was a splendid, large, lofty room, well ventilated and well lighted, both by day and night, and was now opened for any public purpose at a very reasonable rate. It was also available at all times except on special lodge nights, and that as a lecture room, ball room, and concert room etc., it would inevitably be duly appreciated by the Holmfirth public.' The capital outlay required to build the Hall was also confirmed in the Huddersfield Chronicle as being about £1400.0.0, - £300.0.0 of which had been raised by shares of £1.0.0 each, and the rest taken from the funds of Lodge No. 346.

The cost of the building, as reported during the opening ceremony held at the Druids' Hall, is somewhat at variance to that quoted by Henry James Morehouse in 1861 in his book 'The History and Topography of the Parish of Kirkburton and of the Graveship of Holme, including Holmfirth, in the County of York,' in which he states that the cost was £1800.0.0. However the figure of £1400.0.0 as stated in the Chronicle may not have taken into account the loan of £450.0.0 made by Louisa

Hinchliff in November 1851 just before the completion of the building or the £190.0.0 paid for the land on which the building stood.

The building had now been formally opened and was ready for occupation and the only thing remaining was to part-company with Mr. McDonald of the Crown Hotel, and thank him for providing the accommodation for previous gatherings. The twenty-first anniversary of the Briton's Pride Lodge was the last occasion when a meeting was held at his hotel. The event was described in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner on Saturday, the 3rd of July;

'DRUIDS' FESTIVAL. – The 21st anniversary of the Britons Pride Lodge No. 346, of the United Ancient Order of Druids, was celebrated at the house of Mr. McDonald, Crown Tavern, Holmfirth, on Monday last. The members attended divine service at the old Church in the morning, when an eloquent and exceedingly impressive discourse was delivered by the respected incumbent, the Rev. R.E. Leach. At the conclusion the members, 340 in number, partook of a substantial dinner, served in a liberal and superior style by the worthy host and hostess. On the removal of the cloth, the accounts for the past year were read over by the secretary, which were found to be in a very satisfactory state. Being the last anniversary at the Crown Hotel, the members being about to remove to the recently erected Druids' Hall, at Lane-end, a hearty vote of thanks, with three times three, was awarded to the host and hostess, Mr and Mrs McDonald, for their efficient services rendered on all occasions during a period of five years, which was responded to by Mr. McDonald. Brown stout was afterwards freely distributed, and songs, glees, and recitations beguiled the passing hour, until at a late period, when the company separated, highly gratified with the proceedings.'

The Leeds Intelligencer did also add that;

'This society is amongst the most prosperous in the neighbourhood. As a sick, and burial society, it stands pre-eminent for good-management, and only requires the appointment of a medical attendant to the members, (by contract), to render it complete. Without this desideratum, it lacks an essential element to complete its success.'

The new building itself could be considered as being divided into in two sections, one a public house or hotel with adjoining accommodation on the two lower floors, and the Druids' Hall which was situated on the top floor and having its own separate entrance via a winding stone staircase at the left of the building. This dichotomy of entrance solved the conflicting moral views of the Christian, Druidic and temperance societies etc. which used the hall for their various meetings and

gatherings and those who wished to use the hotel merely as a beer house. It also critically solved the problem of financing the running of the building and the repayment of the mortgage in the early years, as the rental from the Druids' Hotel and the adjoining cottages helped towards the cost and upkeep of the premises.

The Ancient Order of the Druids was one of several Friendly Societies which were common in the nineteenth century and in the year 1851, five hundred and ninety Druids were recorded in the Holmfirth / Wooldale area. Most of the members of the organisation worked in the textile industry and were principally from the low management class commonly known as foremen, who banded together to form a protective society. One of its main aims was the care and welfare of their own Brethren in distress and also to give support to their widows and children in times of need. In this sense its aims were very similar to those of the Masonic movement.

The rules of the organisation however were quite strict and stipulated that no member would receive benefits for 'hurt or illness occasioned by fighting (on his part), intoxication, venereal disease or any other disorderly means, and whilst receiving sick pay he should not be allowed to enter a public house, unless it was his residence, nor be intoxicated at home or abroad. Also he would not be allowed to attend a cock-pit, race course, or attend any demoralising game or place, unless in the capacity of a Peace officer, or carry or fire a gun except it be in the military service, self-defence or the protection of property'. Fines were regularly imposed for both minor and more serious breaches of the rules.

The management of the Druids' Hall was vested in a permanent committee of nine members of Lodge 150 who were appointed by a 2/3rds majority at a specially convened meeting. However their rules also stated that should any other Druids' lodge established in the Holmfirth area and using the Druids' Hall subscribe at least £60.0.0 towards its construction they had the right to appoint one of their own members onto the committee. The hall was also used by 'The Ancient Order of Druidesses Lodge No. 4,' but it is not known if they subscribed to its construction or served on the committee although being a female order it is very unlikely.

It was recorded in the deeds relating to the trustees and permanent committee that a meeting was to be held in the month of June every year when a full report of all acts, transactions, receipts and payments made in the preceding year was to be presented to the members and that any changes to rules, regulations, orders etc., should be determined upon a majority of two thirds of the members and other subscribers present, and that the committee should appoint two of its members, one to be Treasurer and one to be Secretary. However no business could be transacted

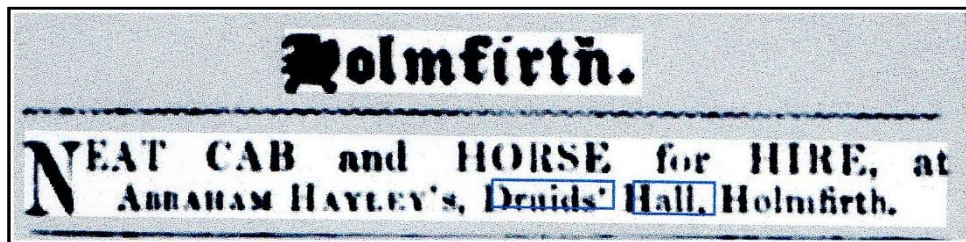
unless at least five members were present, and all members and other subscribers had to have been previously notified of the meeting by a circular addressed to each individual member of the lodge.

The deeds drawn up in 1846 stated;

'that when and so soon as the amount of monies to be raised under the provisions of those present would permit the committee should cause plans and estimates to be prepared for the erection upon the aforesaid plot or parcel of land a hall or building for the use and accommodation of members of the said "Ancient Order of Druids Lodge 150" and of such other lodges and societies as should be admitted and continue subscribers as aforesaid to the amount of sixty pounds as a place of meeting and of such houses and other buildings as the committee should think advisable to be built and the committee should submit such plans and estimates to a general meeting of the members of the said first mentioned lodge and should cause a hall and other buildings to be erected according to such plans and estimates as should be approved by a majority of two thirds of the votes of members of the same lodge present at a general meeting.'

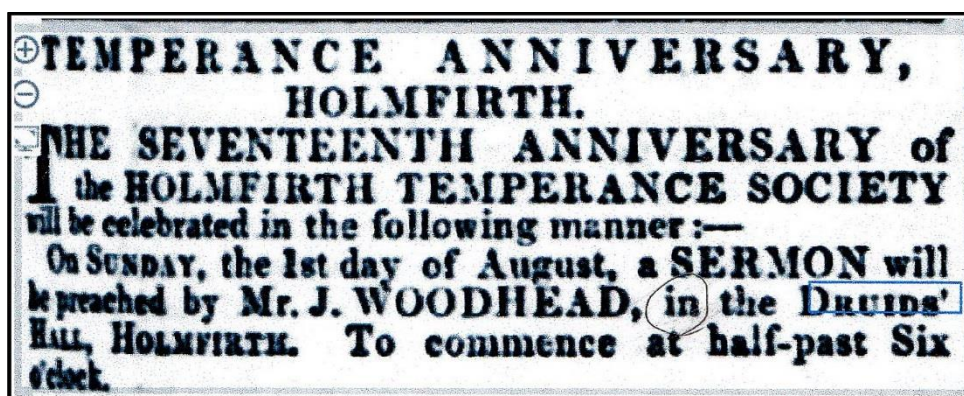
Regrettably the original plans of the hall cannot be traced. They do however exist for the building following the alterations made to it by the Holme Valley Masonic Lodge No.652 between 1917 and 1921 and are illustrated later in the book.

The Druids' Hall was now ready for use and was opened under the tenancy of Abraham Hayley, a man of some enterprise as not only was he an innkeeper but he also hired out a 'neat cab and horse.'



Whilst there is no record of the first meeting of Briton's Lodge 150, they did nevertheless meet every fourth week, at seven o'clock in the evening (railway time). Before the meeting commenced the doors of the hall would be closed and the names of the officers called. Any officer not attending at the appointed time was fined threepence and for non-attendance sixpence, unless he sent a proper substitute.

The Druids' Hall was now being used by the Holmfirth Temperance Society which was one of the first organisations to utilise the room, and who advertised in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner that the seventeen anniversary of the society would be celebrated there on Sunday, the 1st August 1852, when a sermon would be preached by Mr. Joseph Woodhead, the meeting was to commence at half-past six. The celebration attracted a large attendance and Mr. Woodhead preached from 1 Corinthians, 8th Chapter, and 14th verse – 'Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.'



During the mid-Victorian period drinking to excess and drunken behaviour was a major problem locally and nationally and many Christian and Temperance societies attempted to move the young away from this habit by forming what was known as a 'Band of Hope.' On the 25nd September, shortly after the opening of the Druids' Hall, the following article appeared in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner;

'BAND OF HOPE, - PUBLIC MEETING. – In accordance with previous announcement, a public meeting was held at the Druids' Hall, on Wednesday last, to consider the propriety of establishing a Band of Hope in Holmfirth. The meeting was exceedingly large, the hall being very well filled. Mr S. Wimpenny (president of the Temperance Society) occupied the chair, and the meeting was addressed by Messrs. F. Gutteridge and J. Woodhead. The object of the meeting and the nature of a Band of Hope were explained by the speakers, who were attentively listened to by the meeting. It was decided that such a society for the young should be established, and that the youths present who were willing to join in the movement should give their names that evening. In accordance with this, upwards of fifty gave in their names, and the committee announced that ere long a room would be

ready in which they might meet weekly or fortnightly, as might be deemed most convenient. Well-directed effort with the young must be productive of great good to the community.'

The meeting terminated at about 10 o'clock, prior to which a temperance melody was sung by Messrs. James Hurst and Mark Gill.

Following the bursting of the Bilberry Dam earlier in the year, money had been subscribed by the members of the different Druidic lodges in the area for the relief of the brethren and their families who had suffered in the catastrophe.

On Tuesday, the 26th October 1852, the final distribution of this money took place, when upwards of £30.0.0 was dispensed in the Druids' Hall to the various applicants, who it was reported '*appeared thankful for what they had received.*'

Lectures, entertainment and balls had by this time become a regular feature of the Temperance Societies social calendar. A talk on the subject of total abstinence was given by Mr. Trumble, of Huddersfield after which several melodies were sung by members of the newly formed Band of Hope. Lighter entertainment took the form of dancing, which comprised selections of popular marches, quadrilles, polkas etc., and these were interspersed with songs, glees and recitations. The dancing usually continued until a late hour.

Temperance lectures continued to be given on a regular basis, and in the week commencing Monday, the 24th January 1853, four lectures were delivered by Mrs. F. Huggins of Edinburgh entitled 'Parental duty and intoxicating drinks', 'Christian responsibility, in its adoption or rejection of the teetotal principal', 'Female happiness and drunkenness', and 'The concordance of total abstinence from strong drinks with the Christian dispensation'. The lectures were apparently very well received by those present and were frequently interrupted by enthusiastic bursts of applause. When the proceedings came to a close they were followed by a short performance by the Holmfirth Temperance Brass Band.

The hall was by now being used by other societies and individuals for their lectures. On the 14th February 1853, Turner Williams, a fugitive slave from North Carolina gave a talk on 'the horrors of slavery' which was illustrated by a large panorama with scenes taken from 'Uncles Tom's Cabin.' He had previously delivered the same lecture at the public school-room at Upperbridge where he had given a brief account of his marvellous escape. Talks of this nature had become common in 1853 following the publication of Harriet Beecher Stow's book 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' in 1852 and her subsequent visit to the United Kingdom in 1853.

Discussion of political matters, whilst not being permitted on Druidic lodge nights, were nevertheless discussed at meetings held within the Druids' Hall. In the mid – Victorian period workers were becoming increasingly disgruntled with both their working conditions and the wages which they were being paid, and strikes, demonstrations and meetings were being held throughout the country to discuss these problems. Later that year, on the 15th September, a meeting of about one hundred and fifty discontented slubbers took place at the Druids' Hall to consider how they were to proceed with respect to an increase in the wages made to some children, who were employed as 'piecers.' The process of slubbing was a step between carding and spinning the wool prior to its being wound onto a bobbin and was regarded as a skilled occupation and was one of the most highly paid jobs in the mills. The carded wool which was in the form of 'slivers' was given a twist by a machine called a slubbing billy to form a continuous yarn which was then wound onto bobbins. Often the yarn broke during the spinning process and had to be re-connected. This work was done principally by children who had small hands and were agile enough to reach the thread. However the slubbers, who were hard task masters, regarded this work as unskilled.

A majority of children working at the various local mills as piecers had recently struck for an increase in wage of 6d per week for full-timers, and 3d a week for part timers, (they had currently been receiving 4 shilling per week as a full time worker and 2 shillings for part time work). Some had been successful in their aim, but several masters were still unwilling to pay the extra money. However, the slubbers were unhappy that an increase in wage had been made to some, particularly in view of the fact that they regarded this work as unskilled. Walter Fallas occupied the chair that evening and resolutions were passed stating that the slubbers were satisfied with their present rate of 5s.4d in the pound, providing only 4s. a week was paid to each 'piecer;' and that to meet the demands of the 'piecers' each slubber should receive 5s.8p or an increase of 4d in the pound, (the slubbers often employed the piecers and paid them out of the their own wage).

Two months later a further political meeting took place, with the intention of enlisting support for the Preston Operatives. The Preston Operatives were a group of Preston cotton workers who were in dispute with the masters of the local mills over their pay and living conditions. On October of 1853 the workers came out on strike or 'turn out', but were unable to negotiate any favourable terms with their masters who subsequently closed all the mills in Preston before bringing in cheap Irish labour to run their mills. The dispute lasted until the 15th May 1854 when the workers, who had been almost starved to death, had been forced to return to work. The meeting proved to be less than satisfactory, the speakers, a Mrs. Fletcher and Mr. Cowell failed to turn up claiming to have appointments in other areas, where it was felt by many of those present, that they thought their presence would prove

financially more lucrative, and their place was taken by a Lancashire operative called Mr. Grimshaw whose arguments in favour of the strikes were quickly demolished by Mr. James Beardsell and Mr. James Wimpenny. The meeting closed in a most uproarious manner which greatly shook the confidence of Mr. Grimshaw. However nearly seven shillings was collected in support of the Preston 'Turn-outs'.

The hall, was now being used regularly by various local organisations, but was still occupied principally by the Temperance Society for their lectures, musical evenings and balls.

However, on Whit-Tuesday, twelve months after its opening, about one hundred and thirty members of the Ancient Order of Druidesses No. 4, held their annual day there, and after a service held at Holmfirth Church they returned to the hall where a sumptuous meal was provided for them by Mr. Abraham Hayley, the landlord of the Druids' Hotel.

Briton's Pride Lodge No. 346 also celebrated its anniversary on Monday, the 27th June and reference to this was made in the Leeds Intelligencer as follows;

'ANNIVERSARY.- The Briton's Pride Lodge, No. 346 of the order of Druids, celebrated another annual day, in their spacious, convenient, and almost beautiful Hall, at Holmfirth last Monday. After hearing a very appropriate address, in the Old Church, from the Rev. R.E. Leach, upwards of 300 members dined together; the repast being satisfactorily served up by Mr Abraham Hayley, landlord of the Druids' Hotel. The occasion was graced by the presence of the worthy incumbent, who had exhorted the lodge, in spiritual matters, in the forenoon, accompanied by Mr. Marshall, his curate. In the evening, germane speeches were uttered and applauded; and the anniversary terminated most pleasantly. The most gratifying part of the matter yet remains to be recorded; this lodge is the largest in the district; it numbers 360 'brothers'; its prosperity increases; its funds are ample, even beyond its requirements; it can boast of an independent 'Druids' Hall;' and chiefly, it is a source of relief and succour, in the hour of distress, to all connected with it. One thing only lacks to make it a perfect society – the appointment of a medical attendant to attend the members by contract. The system is adopted by almost all other sick-clubs, and found most beneficial.'

Whilst the lodge lacked the services of a medical attendant in 1853 this omission was presumably rectified later as the rules and regulation of the lodge in 1886 stated; "That there be a surgeon appointed to visit every member of this lodge in case of sickness or accident that may occur, and he shall furnish him with any medicine he requires, if the said member resides within three miles of the lodge, likewise a certificate, declaring on the funds, which shall be renewed every fourteen

days, otherwise his sick pay shall be stopped; and he shall, if required examine any person proposed to be a member of this lodge, before his initiation; the said surgeon to be elected or re-elected every yearly day, for which he shall be allowed two shillings and sixpence per member annually, to be paid every four months in advance." There is no record of when this rule was implemented.

In a lighter vein the more serious use of the Druids' Hall was, to some extent, counterbalanced by other forms of entertainment. The Hoffman Organophonic Band was a typical example of this. The band which consisted of seven performers gave vocal imitations of various musical instruments in different combinations, interspersed with the occasional solo performance. On Saturday the 9th July 1853 they gave a concert at the Druids' Hall which was very well received. They had previously performed earlier in the week at the Philosophical Hall in Huddersfield, the National School at Slaithwaite and the National School at Marsden.

TO THE MUSICAL AND CURIOUS.
HOFFMAN'S ORGANOPHONIC BAND,
 OR,
 HUMAN VOICE ORCHESTRA,
 (From St. James's Theatre, London.)

Who have met with the most enthusiastic reception wherever they appeared (lately in Leeds, Bradford, and Halifax), will, on MONDAY, TUESDAY, and WEDNESDAY NEXT, the 4th, 5th, and 6th days of July, give their extraordinary, novel, and unique ENTERTAINMENT in the PHILOSOPHICAL HALL, HUDDERSFIELD.

Prices—Reserved Seats, 2s. 6d. Second Seats, 1s. 6d. Back Seats, 1s.

Performance to commence at half-past Eight o'clock.
 Tickets to be had of Mr. MELLON, Cross Church-street, and all Music Dealers.

National School, SLAITHWAITE, July 7th, 1853, by kind permission of the Rev. S. P. Lampen. Tickets of Mr. Sykes, Postmaster.

National School, MARSDEN, on Friday, the 8th July, by kind permission of the Rev. James Morris Maxfield. Tickets of Mr. Bamforth, Schoolmaster.

Druids' Hall, HOLMFIRTH, Saturday, the 9th of July. Tickets of Mr. Crosland, Bookseller.

However due to the very inclement weather, it had rained heavily throughout the day, the audience was rather smaller than expected.

Wedding celebrations also took place within the hall, and following the marriage of Mr. Walter Buckley to Miss Ellen Woodhead on the 28th September at the Independent Chapel in Holmfirth a celebration dinner was held there on the 8th October, when it was reported that, *'the employes (sic) of Ribblesden Mill were*

liberally entertained at the expense of Mr. Walter Buckley, engineer, and the evening spent in a very agreeable manner.’ The festivity it was said went off ‘*as happy as a marriage bell.*’

Concert and balls were now regularly held within the hall, which on most occasions was described as being large. However on the 1st of August a dance was held under the management of Buckley’s Quadrille Band, and conducted by Mr. J. France, of Honley, when it was said that ‘*the room being rather small, was densely crowded with the, “lovers of the light fantastic toe,” but we should presume not much comfort was enjoyed, owing to the crowded state of the hall.*’

The Druids’ Hall was first opened in 1852 as an unlicensed beer-house and it was August of 1854 before the first application was made for a license. It was one of sixteen similar applications made that day by other beer-houses in the area, and was opposed by Mr. Cookson Stephenson Floyd, a local solicitor and prominent freemason. This application, along with thirteen others, was refused.

The year’s festivities concluded on Christmas Eve with yet another concert and ball, again organised by Buckley’s celebrated Quadrille Band, but despite dancing continuing to a late hour the attendance was rather limited.

The hall continued to be used in a similar vein during 1854, being employed principally by the Briton’s Lodge No.346 for its meetings, the Temperance Society for its festivals, dances and fancy dress balls and by the Ancient Order of the Druidesses for their annual festival. However two lectures on mesmerism were given to a rather small audiences by Mr. Sugden, both of which proved both successful and amusing, and regular fortnightly concerts were performed by Beaumont’s Saxe-horn band.

Early in 1854 Mr. Sutherland’s bill proposing the regulation of Friendly Societies, of which the United Ancient Order Druids was one, was printed. It proposed a provision intended to remove the temptation of crime within the societies and suggested that no more than £3.0.0 be payable in monies assured upon the life of any child dying under ten years of age, and that the money should be paid directly to the undertaker or person conducting the funeral. It also suggested that no established society should assure a payment of over £100.0.0. Opposition to this proposed bill was widespread and a meeting was held, having been convened by placard, at the Druids’ Hall on the 2nd May to discuss this matter.

Such was the feeling that the hall was crowded in every corner, and scores, if not hundreds were unable to gain admission. It was finally agreed ‘*that the various Lodges and other Benefit societies in the locality should, without delay, get up a*

petition in opposition to the bill to be forwarded to Richard Cobden Esq., M.P. for presentation to the House of Commons and that E. Dennison Esq., M.P. be requested to support it.'

In March of 1854, following Russia's destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope on Turkey's Black sea coast, Britain and France declared war on Russia. This gave rise to an exhibition which was held at the Druids' Hall on the 9th and 10th of March which was described as, 'A phantasmagorial exhibition, illustrating the principal places in the Danubian provinces, together with a number of representations of recent battles between the Turks and Russians, and being a subject of importance at the present moment, a tolerable number of persons visited it, many of whom pronounced it excellent.'

The Holmfirth winter fair, which was held near the Druids' Hall came round once again on the 28th October. This was the annual animal fair when a large number of horses, sheep and cattle were exhibited for sale, some being sold at a high price. The pig market in particular attracted a large crowd as there were some fine specimens on display. The Druids' Hall again played its part in the festivities by hosting a musical performance by Beaumont's Sax Horn Band.

Lighter entertainment began in earnest in the hall on the 20th January 1855, when Captain Hudson, who throughout his life was closely involved with the temperance movement, demonstrated his skill in mesmerism to a large audience, the event caused quite a stir and was recorded in the Huddersfield Chronicle;

'DEMONSTRATIONS IN MESMERISM. - On Saturday evening last demonstrations in mesmerism were given to a large audience, in the Druids' Hall. The room being so densely packed, numbers of persons rushed forth from the second seats to the first - hence a regular melee took place, in which the room was damaged, some of the benches broke, etc. In consequence of the smallness of the room, and other matters, Captain Hudson has, during the week, been giving his demonstrations in the large room in the Town Hall, every night (except Thursday) to crowded audiences. The captain has, without a doubt, succeeded in making many converts to mesmerism, but at the same time some of our Holmfirth gentlemen are inclined to be sceptical, and won't believe one iota in the science. On Tuesday evening, the captain having put his female subjects into a state of mesmerism, set them to dance, and at the same time invited any of the company to come forward and test the strength of the females by stopping them, or taking them away. A particular attempt was made by one gentleman, but a regular babel of noise ensued, and some crying shame on such conduct. Several of the feats are truly astonishing, and cause much gossip in the neighbourhood; he has also succeeded in gaining subjects to perform on from the inhabitants of the town. It would be useless to

enumerate the many operations he goes through; suffice it to say that having called a person from the auditory, he, with the aid of a few persons, set him on the platform and left the room, caused all his subjects to flock round their new master, (being attracted thereto by the few passes made upon the body of the person) and then stuck to him so firm that it was of no avail for him to push them away.'

Following his lecture he was approached by the relatives of a missing Marsden teenage, Sarah Ann Lumb, who had fallen in the River Colne in December 1854 and was presumed drowned, with a view to finding her body. Together with a young clairvoyant Mary Ann Challard of Moldgreen, who frequently accompanied him, they were successful in locating the girl's body in the river at Mirfield.

On a more serious note, a lecture was given by Mr. Gammage, the author of 'The History of the Chartist Movement,' to a largely working class audience, on 'The war; what it is for, and what it ought to be for.' (The Crimean war was still being fought), and 'The rights of labour,' in which he expounded some crude impracticable theories, spiced with a considerable amount of abuse of the capitalists.

Three years had now passed since the opening of the Druids' Hall and the devastating flood which had inundated the village of Holmfirth, and life was beginning to return to normal.

May was the month of the Holmfirth Feast, otherwise known as the May Fair and was celebrated locally by the temperance society members and those of the Methodist reform movement, together with residents of Holmfirth and the outlying districts. Sunday, the 20th May, the first day of the feast proved to be very dusty, and with the exception of open air meetings of the temperance society and the Methodist reform movement nothing much happened. However, despite this, a great number of people were brought into the town by train or by other means of transport and it was reported that 'good order prevailed throughout the day.'

Monday was the most important day of the feast and was the day the circus came to town, and the morning, it was said, was spent by them preparing for their afternoon performance. The circus was that of Pablo Fanque and Newsome, a famous group of entertainers consisting of acrobats, tightrope walkers and equestrian experts and was the most popular circus in Victorian Britain for over thirty years.

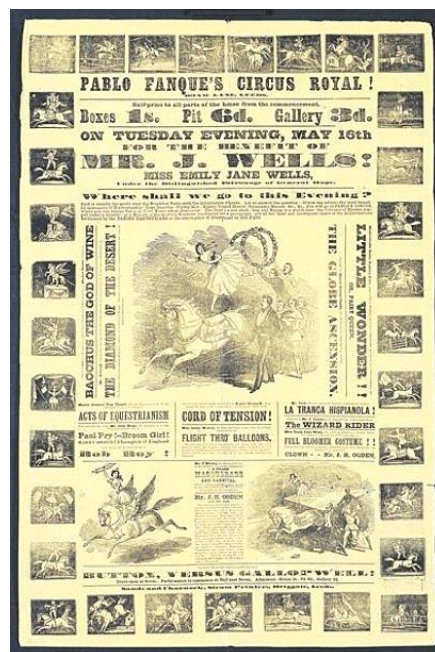
Pablo Fanque, who was born William Darby, was himself an expert acrobat, tightrope walker and equestrian and was the first black circus owner. He was also a member of the Order of Ancient Shepherds, an organisation with similar ideals to those of the Druids.

He was in partnership with James Newsome with whom he carried on a business in Manchester as an equestrian manager. The partnership however was terminated the following year on the 2nd February 1856.

The Illustrated London News wrote of him;

'Mr Pablo Fanque is an artiste of colour, and his steed we have not only never seen surpassed, but never equalled. Mr Pablo Fanque was the hit of the evening the steed in question was Beda, the black mare that Fanque bought from Batty (Fanque had been apprenticed to Batty prior to forming his own circus). That the horse attracted so much attention was testament to Fanque's extraordinary horse training skills.'

Despite his previously successful career he died in great poverty in a rented room at the Britannia Inn Stockport.



Type of poster used by Pablo Fanque to advertise his circus at the May Fair

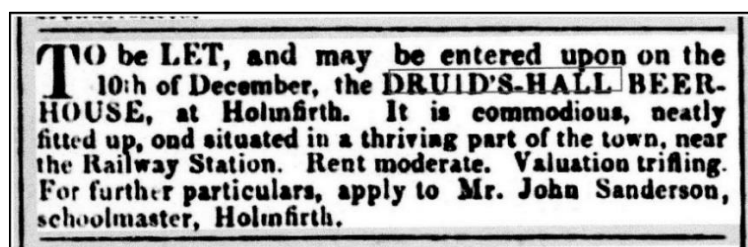
The day started fine but by afternoon the weather had become somewhat unfavourable. This however did not deter the vast number of people who were there to spend an enjoyable day, or prevent the stall holders selling their barcelonas

(small biscuits) and gingerbread. The swing boats and novelty stalls all attracted a large number of customers and the musicians were enjoyed by all.

The Druids' Hall played its part in the festivities when on both Monday and Tuesday evenings Messrs Hill and a company were giving concerts to a full house.

Cricket was played locally and following a match with Pudsey on the 6th August 1855, the Holmfirth cricket club, which had been founded in 1850, held a ball and concert at the hall, this however was poorly attended due to bad weather. A return match was held on the 22nd September when Holmfirth were defeated by one run. A ball and concert was held that evening which continued to nearly twelve o'clock.

It was later the same year that the tenancy of the Druids' Hall changed hands. Abraham Hayley had been landlord since its opening in 1852, but on the 20th October 1855 the Druids' Hall Beer-house was advertised to let and Mr. John Hirst became the licensee.



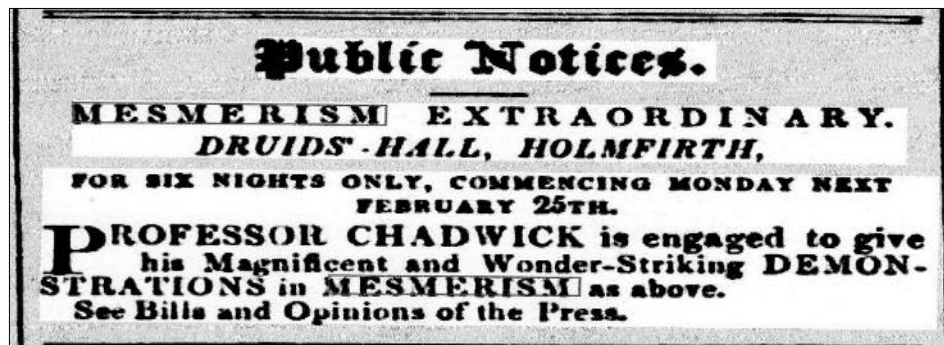
Before the premises changed hands however, the Order of Druidesses, Lodge No. 4, celebrated their anniversary there on Whit-Tuesday and the Briton's Pride Lodge No 346 held their annual festival on the 25th June 1855, when the following report appeared in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner;

'UNITED ANCIENT ORDER OF DRUIDS, - The annual festival of the Briton's Pride Lodge No. 346 was celebrated on Monday last, at the Druids' Hall, Holmfirth, for which occasion the walls were tastefully decorated with oak leaves, laurel, and bunches of flowers; banners containing suitable inscriptions, being hung in the intervening spaces. At one o'clock, the members, about 320 in number, sat down to a good substantial dinner, which comprised most of the delicacies in season, and did credit to Mr. Hayley. On removal of the cloth, P.A. Sanderson was called to the chair, and he opened the proceedings in a few appropriate observations, concluding by calling upon Mr. Knott, the secretary, to read the report. This document showed that, notwithstanding the enormous sums paid during the year, for sickness (nearly £200), upwards of £40 had been added to stock. On the report being submitted and adopted, a party of glee singers,

consisting of Misses Varley and Oldfield, and Messrs. Kaye, Roebuck, Lee, and Moor, was introduced. Mr. Joe Wood, professor of music, Holmfirth, presided at the pianoforte. The various pieces selected for the occasion were executed in a manner highly creditable to the performers, and to the satisfaction of all present. The concert concluded by the whole company singing, standing, the National Anthem.'

The mysteries of mesmerism continued to fascinate the people of Holmfirth and following an advertisement in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner on the 23rd February 1856 Professor Chadwick gave his 'Magnificent and Wonder-Striking Demonstration' at the Druids' Hall.

Richard Sheldon Chadwick was a self-proclaimed Professor, having never been to university. He was a phrenologist, a stage mesmerist and travelling lecturer. He was also a poet and in 1861 had the honour of receiving fifty shillings from the Queens Royal Bounty, a secret fund dispensed under the patronage of the Prime Minister, for his poetic works. This honour was bestowed upon him at the recommendation of Lord Palmerston the then Prime Minister.



At twelve noon on Thursday of that week, Professor Chadwick had placed a young man in a hypnotic state in a hamper which was carried through the streets of Holmfirth until seven-thirty in the evening when he was set at liberty in the hall.

The Crimean war which had begun in October 1853 ended in February 1856. Meetings were immediately held at the Town Hall to discuss how the event should be celebrated. It was decided that a public demonstration should be held on the 29th May throughout the district involving parades and the general decoration of the local streets and buildings. The area adjacent to Lane End near to where the Druids' Hall was situated was decorated in the following manner; 'J. Hixon Esq., windows brightly illuminated, variegated flag with V.R. crown and N. – Victoria Tap, St.

George's flag and Union Jack, - Victoria Hotel, tricolour; V.R. and crown, in gas jets, - Mr Brammall, two tricolours, - Mr Thewlis, tricolour, - Druids' Hall, tricolour and blue flag.' However prior to this, and to coincide with the May Fair a moving diorama of the Russian war was presented at the Druids' Hall.

Briton's Pride Lodge celebrated its anniversary once again on Saturday, the 5th July and reference was made to this in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner that evening. In common with all the Druidic lodges in the district the Briton's Pride Lodge had its own society banner. Unfortunately no records or pictures are available to show or describe it fully. However the article published that evening goes some way to rectify this omission.

'The Briton's Pride, at the Druids'-hall, held their anniversary. At an early hour this morning, the societies' banner was hoisted in front of the hall, which had a beautiful effect. The silver letters on a rich blue ground were magnificent and attracted considerable attention. The interior of the hall, which has been thoroughly cleansed and newly painted and renovated, presented a pleasing aspect, more especially when it was well garnished in the inside with provisions prepared for the numerous guests who were in readiness to seat themselves at the festive board. At two o'clock, the signal for dining was given, and presently every seat in the room was taken up. On the removal of the cloth, the report was submitted and unanimously adopted; a committee was also appointed to revise the rules, and other business belonging to the order was transacted. The evening was spent in a most agreeable manner.'

The Holmfirth cricket club continued to use the room for its dances, and on the 13th September the Holmfirth Horticultural, Floral and Agricultural Society held its exhibition there for the first time, this had been held previously at Holmfirth Town Hall. The society was under the patronage of the clergy, magistrates and gentlemen of the district and was open to any person residing within a two mile radius of Holmfirth. It was said that the dahlias were magnificent, and whilst the fruits were scantily supplied, the grapes shown by Mr John Boothroyd, of Wolf Stones were exceptional. The vegetables were, both in quantity and quality excellent.

Although the Druids' Hall had opened for business in 1853 it still remained a beer-house, its application for a license having first been rejected in 1854. A further application was made by the landlord John Hirst, in August 1856 and was similarly rejected. The Huddersfield Chronicle gave a full explanation as to the reason for its lack of success.

'Mr Clough applied for a license for John Hirst of the Druids' Hall, Holmfirth. The licensed victuallers had formally opposed the application. This year however they did not do so. – Mr. Floyd, mainly on behalf of B. Shaw, Esq., stated there was no need of another license, inasmuch as there was Mrs Kippax, of the Victoria, within 150 yards of this hall on one side, and there was the Friendship Inn, 150 yards on the lower side of it. Nothing was urged against the capabilities of the house, which was the property of the Druids themselves, and erected for the purpose of conducting their own lodge business.'

On the morning of Thursday, the 13th November a near potential disaster occurred at the Druids' Hall. A report of the incident appeared in The Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner;

'CAUTION. – We have on several occasions cautioned people about leaving their clothes, near the fire to dry during the night, the practice is exceedingly dangerous, and many serious accidents have resulted therefrom. On Thursday morning, Mr. Hirst, keeper of the Druids' Hall Beerhouse, at Holmfirth, got out of bed rather earlier than usual, lit the fire, around which were placed on a clothes horse, a number of articles of clothing drying. He afterwards left the house for the purpose of doing business. During his absence, his son, a boy about ten years of age, got out of bed, and whilst engaged doing something about the fire, the clothes became ignited, and they were rapidly consumed. Fortunately, the lad's mother, who was in bed in an upper room, hearing the noise, instantly came down, and with great difficulty extinguished the flames, or, very probably, the recently erected building, the Druids' Hall would have been destroyed.'

By 1857 the hall had been open for five years and several other organisations were now making use of its facilities. One of these was the Secular and Republican movement which was reported in the 'Reasoner' to have held a meeting there on the 22nd and 23rd January 1857 when following lectures given by George Jacob Holyoake, who was a vigorous campaigner, atheist, self-proclaimed agitator and champion of the working class, a collection was made for funds to support his 'mission' to the West Riding.

Holyoake published an article in the Reasoner relating to this visit when he wrote;

'If Dewsbury was drizzled, Holmfirth was drenched. Much has been said about the great flood at Holmfirth, and if washed away a better Holmfirth could be built. The Druids' Hall where the lectures were held, is however a pleasant place, and the number of persons present showed that no amount of drenching would wash the spirit out of the Holmfirth people. A young man, a Wesleyan, who always shut his

eyes when he opened his mouth, who looked asleep, but was uncomfortably awake, made many somnolent comments. I am sorry a daguerreotype of the Druids' Hall during the debates cannot accompany this report.'

It was in July of 1857 that the first intimation of a possible link between the Wesleyan Reformers and their use of the Druids' Hall was made. As was usual, the members of the Briton's Pride Lodge held their annual anniversary at the hall but afterwards, and for the first time, they formed in procession and walked to the Wesleyan Reformers' preaching room in the village of Wooldale, where a sermon was delivered by Mr. H.J. Wadsworth. After their return to the Druids' Hall a dinner was served to about three hundred members.

The following month, on Sunday, the 5th July, the Wesleyan Reform Group began its use of the Druids' Hall for its services. This was brought to the attention of the readers of the Huddersfield Chronicle the following week;

'WESLEYAN REFORM. – The friends of the Methodistic reform in Holmfirth have, for a number of years, occupied the Town-Hall for religious purposes, but on Sunday last the Druids' Hall was occupied by them for public worship, they have given up the Town-Hall. The opening of the new hall was marked by special services, held morning and evening, when sermons were preached by Mr. R. Houghton, of Almondbury. Collections were made in behalf of the current expenses.'

A year had now passed since an application had been made, and rejected in 1857 for a license for the Druids' Hall. As a consequence of this rejection a further request was made by Mr Clough, representing Mr. John Hirst the landlord, who said that this was the fifth application. Regrettably, despite all opposition having been withdrawn and the bench admitting that there was sufficient accommodation in the house for it to be made a licensed house, the application was rejected once again on the grounds that there were four licensed premises within a distance of 250 yards.

In August of that year a trip to Hull was organised under the auspices of the United Ancient Order of the Druids, of which The Briton's Pride Lodge No.346 was a member. The railway line had opened seven years previously on the 1st July 1850 and this appears to have been the first occasion when it had been used by so many of the Druids in the area. On the 1st of the month it was reported that at an early hour a large number of people totalling upwards of 1000 crowded the small platform at Holmfirth with the intention of joining a pleasure excursion to the Zoological Gardens at Hull. They were accompanied by the Holmfirth Temperance

Band who were taking part in the Druids' Band contest to be held there. The test piece played was 'The Heavens are Telling' by Franz Joseph Hayden and was conducted by James Deacon. It was said that, 'after a day's recreation, they arrived at Holmfirth at about two o'clock the following morning without a single accident, and that the Temperance Band succeeded in bringing away the third prize of £3.'

The mid nineteenth century was a time of unrest within the British Empire and beyond. By March of 1856 the Crimean war had drawn to an end but trouble was brewing in India. On the Wednesday evening of 21st October 1857 a meeting was convened at the Druids' Hall by the newly established Holmfirth Foreign Affairs Committee. The title of the lecture given by Mr. Ironside of Sheffield was "The loss of India, the ruin of England." He spoke at great length of the origin of the Indian mutiny, of cartridges greased with pig and cow fat and the general malpractices of England towards that country and its people. He said of the members of the British government that the peers and members of parliament 'were quite ignorant of the nature of our foreign affairs, and not at all careful of our interests, though mindful of their own.' The meeting was well attended, the hall being completely full and composed entirely of the working class.

Christmas came and went once again but not before the members of the Wesleyan Reform Church had held a tea-meeting, after which several members addressed the gathering.

A regular pattern had now begun to evolve with respect to the use of the hall. Eighteen fifty-eight continued in a similar vein to those of previous years with the various Druidic Lodges celebrating their anniversaries, the Wesleyan Reform Church holding regular meetings, and the celebration of their feast day in May, along with the annual Holmfirth Horticultural show, concerts and balls.

By the end of April 1859 the West Riding elections to choose a suitable member to represent the area in parliament were becoming immanent and a meeting of working men was called at the Druids' Hall on Thursday, the 21st April to consider a suitable candidate. Following an earnest debate it was decided unanimously that Sir John William Ramsden and Mr. Frank Crossley were fit and proper candidates to represent the West Riding of Yorkshire. Later that year, on the first of October, the hall was used by the Revision Court to revise the list of voters in the Holmfirth polling district.

The Secularist and Republican movement had given lectures at the hall in 1857 and on Saturday, the 8th October 1859 it was announced that 'Iconoclast is coming.'

‘Iconoclast’ was the pseudonym used by Charles Bradlaugh, a solicitor’s clerk and outspoken secularist, republican and member of the Reform League, who used the name to protect his employer.

The meeting was reported in the Huddersfield Chronicle;

‘ICONOCLAST. – A few weeks ago placards were placed on the walls at Holmfirth, headed ‘Iconoclast is coming.’ Well ‘Iconoclast’ came, and his visit had the effect of stirring up the religious public to a sense of duty in defence of the Word of God, and in counteracting the influence of the principles which the arch-infidel endeavoured to disseminate. The various ministers of religion have put on their armour, and have come boldly forward in defence of the “Book of Books,”- the Bible; and what is equally pleasing, the people flock in crowds to hear them. On Sunday morning last, the Rev. R. Willan, independent minister, delivered an impressive discourse in the Lane Chapel, on “Infidel preaching,” when the place was crowded to excess.’

Bradlaugh spoke again on three successive nights in November when it was said that “The judicious and thinking portion of the people of Holmfirth stopped away.” It was Bradlaugh’s opinion that certain members of society considered themselves superior to others, however, it was deemed by some of the inhabitants of Holmfirth that the price of admission to his lectures was in contrast to his views; “Front seats, 6d; back seats, 3d.”

Further lectures of a similar nature were held at the Druids’ Hall in January 1861, when the speakers on this occasion were George Jacob Holyoake, his brother Austen Holyoake, Joseph Barker and Charles Bradlaugh, (‘Iconoclast’).

Following his successful lectures on mesmerism in 1855 Captain Hudson made a return visit during the first week of November 1859 when he took occasion to remark on the dark state of the streets in Holmfirth and gave some humorous accounts of the comments, made by some, on gas being first introduced in London. He said that in their opinion, gas might do to light a room, but would never do to light the streets. However, he said, experience had shown that the elements were illuminated with gas lights in almost every town of any note, and that he hoped the time was not far distant when he would see Holmfirth follow the example of other places in the matter of lighting the streets.

The year concluded once again on a religious note with a lecture given by the Rev. T.W. Holmes, Wesleyan Reform minister on Martin Luther King. There was a good audience, and the admission money went in aid of the Chapel building fund.

Eighteen-sixty commenced in a lighter vein with the housewives tea party held on Shrove Tuesday. The Holmfirth Chronicle said of it;

'Tea parties have been rather numerous at Holmfirth this Shrove Tuesday, a few of which may be noticed. On Tuesday night the good housewives residing in the neighbourhood of the Druids' Hall, to the number of 90, gathered together at that place, and sat down to an excellent dish of the best "gunpowder" tea, served in a manner reflecting great credit on Mrs Woodhead, the hostess. After tea the good dames gave a loose to the tongue, and with chatter and the strains of Beaumont's Saxe-horn band, the evening was agreeably passed away.'

The Druids' Hall was the site of several meetings of importance to the local residents. One of these was held on Thursday, the 8th March 1860, when a large audience was addressed by Mr. Dickenson, of Almondbury and Mr. Jagger, of Rochdale, under the auspices of the Holmfirth Co-operative Society. Rochdale was the original site of the Society of Equitable Pioneers, an early form of the co-operative movement and which is still part of the Co-operative group. The lecture was entitled "How every man may become his own banker," and was an attempt to persuade the inhabitants of Holmfirth to form a local co-operative society to work in connection with that at Holmbridge. The purpose of the society, it was said, 'was to raise the labouring classes from their present precarious condition,' and the speakers gave detailed accounts of the successes experienced in other parts of the country.

A sketch of the Holmbridge society was given and it was said that the amount of shares subscribed for was £1200.0.0, and that the capital already paid up was £400.0.0. The meeting proved to be very lively and a resolution was moved by Mr. Joseph Hoyle and seconded by Mr. G. Wimpenny, which was ably supported by Mr. Smithies of Rochdale, that a society be formed at Holmfirth in connection with that at Holmbridge.

The Briton's Pride lodge continued to prosper and at their annual anniversary dinner held at the Druids' Hall in June, when 336 members were present, it was stated that not less than £100.0.0 had been added to their funds.

The members of the Wesleyan Free Church had used the Druids' Hall for their meetings since the 5th July 1857, but on Thursday, the 27th September 1860 they severed their connection and moved to their new church in Holmfirth built on the site of the present market between Hollowgate and Huddersfield Road. The finances for the project had been raised by their own efforts and the building was said to have cost some £1200.0.0

Two months later on Sunday the 18th November, and in total contrast to its use by the Wesleyans the secularists returned to the hall. Those residents of Holmfirth who wished had the opportunity to hear two lectures by Mr John Watts, of London entitled, 'The Soul, what is it?' and 'The Christian doctrine of depravity refuted.' It was said that, 'some believed, and some believed not.' The following day the theme was 'The origin and development of man,' (Charles Darwin had published his book, 'The Origin of Species' in November of the previous year), however the audience was very thin indeed and it was reported that it appeared that enough had been said on the Sunday to satisfy very many for a season. The admission charge to the Druids' Hall was 2d for males, whilst females were free.

Almost twelve months had passed since the meeting had taken place within the hall with the aim of forming a Co-operative Society in Holmfirth to work in connection with that already formed at Holmbridge when on Tuesday, the 1st January 1861, the Holmbridge Co-operative Society held their first anniversary at the Druids' Hall. The meeting was well recorded in the Huddersfield Chronicle and gave a clear insight into the finances of the organisation;

'HOLMBRIDGE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY. – The members of this extensive concern held their first anniversary on Tuesday, in the Druids' Hall, at Holmfirth, where some 300 persons partook of an excellent tea, and its adjuncts, which had been prepared by the ladies connected with the society. After tea, the half-yearly report was read by Mr. J.M. Shore, the secretary, which showed that the business done had been to the amount of near £3,000, leaving a commensurate profit to the shareholders. After so pleasing a report, the after proceedings were in unison with it. Mr. N. Charlesworth occupied the chair, and addresses on the advantages of co-operation were given by Mr. J. Littlewood, Mr. T.B. Hirst, and a gentleman from the Dukinfield society. To add to the pleasure of the company, a party of glee singers had been engaged, consisting of Mrs. Coldwell, Miss Preston, and Messrs. Roebuck, Coldwell, and Woodcock, with Mr. J.E. Pearson at the piano, and their services gave much delight and satisfaction. After spending a few hours thus pleasantly, the proceedings were closed by voting thanks to the chairman, the speakers, the choir, and to the ladies for 'getting up the tea in the good old way.'

Religion and matters of the church continued to play an important part in the lives of the many of the residents of Holmfirth and this was reflected in the type of lectures presented at the Druids' Hall. On Monday, the 10th February 1862 a talk was delivered by Mr. Joseph Baker on the subject of, 'The Bible, the Church, and the Priesthood.' With regard to the Bible, the lecturer said 'it contained the best teachings of any book in existence, and those who studied it, he thought, must be

insane to reject its teachings.’ The following evening the subject was ‘Ethnology, or the nations of the earth’. It was said that both lectures were very interesting and that at a penny for admittance there was a fair audience.

The problem of sanitation in and around the region of the Druids’ Hall was now causing some concern and the matter was brought to the attention of the public on the 22nd February 1862 when the Huddersfield Chronicle complained that the Wooldale Nuisance Committee were neglecting their duties and that they should direct their attention towards the neighbourhood of the Cliffe, the Druids’ Hall, etc., where some of the residents had threatened to leave their dwellings if some sanitary improvement was not effected.

Mr Benjamin Woodhead, had been the landlord of the Druids’ Hall since 1860 when, on Saturday the 27th May 1862, he died suddenly. This was reported in the Huddersfield Chronicle the following Saturday;

‘AWFULLY SUDDEN DEATH. - An instant of very sudden death occurred at Holmfirth, on Saturday morning last. On that morning, Mr. Benjamin Woodhead, of the Druids’ Hall, got out of bed in his usual health about six o’clock, and on looking out of the window, said to Mrs. Woodhead that the people were going to work. He then sat down on the bedside, when his head immediately drooped upon his breast. Mrs. Woodhead spoke to him, but receiving no answer she arose, and seeing that something was the matter with him, she alarmed the house. She then raised him in her arms, when in two or three minutes the vital spark fled from its earthly tenement. Deceased was 67 years of age, highly respected, and was followed to the grave by a large concourse of relatives, friends, and neighbours.’

Mrs. Ann Woodhead, his wife, remained landlady until her death, on the 26th March 1869 at the age of seventy-four. She and her husband had been resident at the Druids’ Hall for almost eleven years.

One year after the death of her husband she is reported as serving up an excellent dinner to three hundred of the brethren of the Briton’s Pride lodge in the hall, of which it was said of the building and its members;

‘it is a noticeable structure, and belongs to the society. The upper storey, in which is a large lodge-room and side offices is reached by winding-stairs in the wings of the building, while the middle and lower storeys are occupied as a very respectable beer-house, by Mrs Woodhead, who served up an excellent dinner. This society is the most numerous one in the district, and a great majority of the members appear to be in the vigour of manhood.’

The year concluded once again in a festive manner, when following a tea party held in the hall on Monday, the 26th December, the evening was spent in dancing, singing, and other amusements calculated to make up a 'Merry Christmas.'

Business within the hall carried on as normal throughout the next few years. Lectures on temperance being a regular feature, and after one given by Mrs Sanderson, of Sheffield, who was one of the "Hallelujah Band," her remarks on drunkenness were said by some to have been most poignant, whilst other members of the audience affirmed that they were true from their own experiences.

The Hallelujah Band was formed by General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army and were said by some to be, 'a motley crew of converted sinners who had been enlisted to convert others.' Other contemporaries were not as generous in their description of them and said that, 'They were a show company of converted reprobates – as motley a crew of reclaimed blackguards as ever mustered on a convict ship, poachers, drunkards, wife-beaters, prize fighters and gaol-birds of every degree of infamy – eagerly enlisted in the service of revival.' The audience however enjoyed the lecture, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the speaker.

The Briton's Pride Lodge continued to prosper and despite having paid £200.0.0 in sick and funeral expenses in 1865 and a further £200.0.0 on other expenses the societies stock still remained at almost £1600.0.0.

The members of 'The Old Club', The Holmfirth Old Friendly Society, celebrated their 103rd anniversary on Monday, the 1st August 1864, and following a service at Lane Chapel some returned to the Druids' Hall where dinner had been prepared for them. The 'Old Club' was the oldest and wealthiest friendly society in Holmfirth and at one time could boast over one thousand members and held funds which were in the region of £2000.00. However by 1873 the membership was reduced to two honorary and eighty-nine ordinary members. Nevertheless in 1864 the membership was such that the members celebrated the occasion at three different venues, some dining at the King's Head Inn, some at the Friendship Inn and others at the Druids' Hall.

Other clubs celebrated their anniversaries within the hall. One of the newer bodies, the 'Pride of the Holme Valley, Royal Arch Chapter No. 25,' an offshoot of the United Ancient Order of Druids, held their third anniversary there on Saturday, the 16th June 1866, when after dinner had been served and normal business had been attended to, presentations of beautiful glass inkstands mounted on black wooden cases were made to Bothers James Knott and Jesse Shore, both having held the

office of P.M.C.S.R.A., for their untiring energy and zeal in the service of the Chapter since its formation.

Jesse Shore, who was a local joiner from Hey Gap, was also a member of the Holme Valley Masonic Lodge No. 652, where he held the office of Tyler. He was to become the longest serving Tyler recorded in the history of that lodge, remaining in that office for sixty years until his death in 1922.

By 1864 a certain amount of dissent was beginning to occur within the Druidic movement locally and it was later that year on Saturday, the 13th October that a meeting was held in the Druids' Hall by the members of the United Ancient Order of Druids to consider whether they should separate from that Order and join the Amalgamated Order of Druids. It was stated in the Huddersfield Chronicle that;

'Mr. Abraham Hinchliffe presided, and addresses were given on the subject by Messrs. J. Sanderson, J. Kenworthy, and several others, who all declaimed against being lorded over as they had been by those at the head of the Order at Huddersfield. After the merits of the case had been fully discussed, the meeting came to the unanimous resolution to join the Amalgamated Order. The meeting, which was very unanimous, was brought to a close by thanking the chairman and speakers, and also with cheers at the result.'

The break from the United Ancient Order of Druids proved to be quite rapid as on the 26th December 1866 the Chronicle again reported that they had held their first annual tea party at the hall;

The details of their meeting read as follows;

'TEA PARTIES – On Wednesday night the Order of Druids had their first annual tea party in the Druids' Hall, Holmfirth, when 300 persons sat down. At the meeting after tea Mr John Sanderson was called to the chair, and gave a lengthy address on the importance of friendly societies to the working classes. Appropriate addresses were also given by Messrs. J. Knott, J. Kenworthy, J. Seddon, and other friends. A party of glee singers consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Hirst, Honley, and Mr. F. Bailey, New Mill, with Mr. William Sandford at the pianoforte, added much to the other pleasures of company. The room was beautifully decorated with evergreens, etc. The routine thanks closed the proceedings.'

The death of Ann Woodhead had left the tenancy of the Druids' Hall vacant but she was quickly replaced by Hugh Holmes. However it was not long before the new landlord was in trouble with the law and appeared in court on the charge of selling beer during prohibited hours. The report stated that;

'Hugh Holmes, of the Druids' Hall, was summoned for selling beer during prohibited hours. Police-constable Waring said he visited the house on Sunday morning, the 25th July, (1869), at half-past eleven, and found a number of persons drinking.'

He was fined 5s. and costs.

This fine does not appear to have deterred him as on Sunday, the 26th February 1871 he was charged with the same offence. The case was reported as follows;

'Hugh Holmes, of the Druids' Hall, was charged with supplying beer to persons in his house during prohibited hours on Sunday, February 26th. Inspector Dimilow and Police-constable Naylor deposed to visiting the house on that day, about 10.30am., and found three men and three women in the front room with a quart jug of beer and glasses. Mr. S.S. Booth defended, and, from evidence he adduced, it appears that on the above-named day this party had come from Bank End, in Austonley, and one couple had been married at the Holmfirth Church, from whence they went to the Druids' Hall to engage a cab to convey them to Thongsbridge Station. – Their worships dismissed the case, alleging that the question did not come within the meaning of the Act, they being travellers.'

Like Abraham Hayley, the first landlord, Hugh Holmes was also an enterprising character, who for several years operated an omnibus service which ran from Lane End, Holmfirth, to the Commercial Inn in Holmebridge. Unfortunately by late 1872 this enterprise had become unprofitable and the matter was noted in Huddersfield Chronicle on Saturday, the 21st December.

'DISCONTINUANCE OF THE HOLMFIRTH AND HOLMEBRIDGE OMNIBUS, - It appears from a circular issued by Mr. Hugh Holmes, of the Druids' Hall, Holmfirth, that after the end of this week he intends to cease running the omnibus which for the last three years he has kept up between Lane End and the Commercial Inn, Holmebridge. From some cause the omnibus has been run at a loss, but it is to be hoped some arrangement will be at once made to keep up the communication between the two places, as the stoppage of the omnibus will be a great inconvenience to the inhabitants of Holmebridge (sic) and Hinchliff Mill during the winter months. – A meeting of the subscribers was held on Thursday evening at the Commercial Inn, when it was decided that a subscription should be made to defray the expenses incurred in running the omnibus which the passenger fares do not cover. Several subscriptions were promised in the room, and others are to be obtained, so as to guarantee Mr. Holmes from loss in the future, and he will therefore continue to run it as usual.'

Whilst the business of cab and omnibus hire was, no doubt, in the main profitable it was however fraught with numerous problems. Hugh Holmes and his staff appear to have been both unreliable, and men in a hurry, which gave rise to a number of court appearances as a result of accidents which occurred during the course of his trade. On the 1st October 1870 it was reported in the Huddersfield Chronicle;

ACTION FOR INJURIES TO A HORSE. -

Hugh Holmes, omnibus proprietor, Holmfirth, brought an action to recover £12.8s.6p., for injuries to a horse. The claim was supported by Mr. John Sykes; and Mr Booth of Holmfirth appeared on behalf of the defendant, Mr. Joshua Mellor, manufacturer, of Thongsbridge. A jury had been empanelled to hear the case, which occupied the attention of the Court for several hours. It appeared that, on the 5th January, a party of ladies and gentlemen came from the neighbourhood of Holmfirth, to attend Mr. Charles Halle's concert at Huddersfield; and the plaintiff had been engaged to convey them back in an omnibus. Instead of being at the Imperial Hotel at half-past ten o'clock, Holmes did not appear until after eleven. The Ladies, becoming impatient, requested the defendant to drive. He complied with their wishes, and, when descending Chapel Hill, the vehicle ran against a lamp-post. The conveyance was smashed, and the horse sustained such injuries as caused its death on the sixth of the same month. It was alleged, in defence, that, the driver being incapable of taking charge of the reins, the company desired the defendant to drive; and also that the injuries to the horse were the result of an accident. The jury retired, and, after a protracted deliberation, the foreman (Mr F.F. Shaw) stated that they could not agree, and the judge, therefore, discharged them.

Six months later, on the 15th April, Hugh Holmes appeared in court once again, when on this occasion he was charged with;

RUNNING OVER A WOMAN, -

Hugh Holmes, cab proprietor, appeared on a charge brought by one Sarah Sykes, for furious driving. From evidence, it appears that about noon on the 9th March, complainant was proceeding with her husband's dinner, and when she got to Upperbridge, and about to cross the road, she waited a little until a waggon had passed. As it was very rough and a wet day she had an umbrella up, and did not see or hear the defendant's cab and horse, which was driven very fast, consequently she was knocked down, and the wheels passed over her legs, severely bruising one side of her hip. The defendant was fined 1s., and costs, £1.11s.6p.

His safety record continued to give rise for concern as two further accounts of accidents caused by his staff were printed in the Huddersfield Chronicle, the first on the 29th August, was the result of a prank carried out by a party of newly-weds;

CAB ACCIDENT IN HOLMFIRTH. –

An accident occurred yesterday morning out of a foolish lark played at Bridge Mill. A couple who were employed at the mill had been married that morning, and about eleven o'clock were returning from church, past Bridge Mill, to Netherthong, in two cabs belonging to Mr. Hugh Holmes, cab proprietor. Some of the companions of the wedding party thought they would stop the cabs from passing until the occupants paid them a footing, or treated them, so they suspended a long iron bar across the road between the mills. The occupants of the first cab paid to pass through, but when the second cab, containing females, came up to the bar, the horse jumped over it, followed by the cab, and both horse and cab were upset, the springs and cab windows being broken, and the persons in the cab being thrown out, but not greatly injured.

The second, more serious incident, was reported on the 22nd November and was linked to an;

ACCIDENT TO A CHILD AT HOLMFIRTH. –

About four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, a cab belonging to Mr. Hugh Holmes was being driven at a rapid speed down Victoria-street, when a boy about four years old, son of John Doline, of Gully, was crossing the road. The horse knocked the boy down and two of the wheels passed over his breast. When removed he was taken to Mr. Ediss's surgery, and it was found that three of his ribs were broken. After being attended to by Mr. Ediss, he was removed home, where he remains in a very critical state.

Despite previously having been cautioned, accidents continued to occur, as the following June there was a;

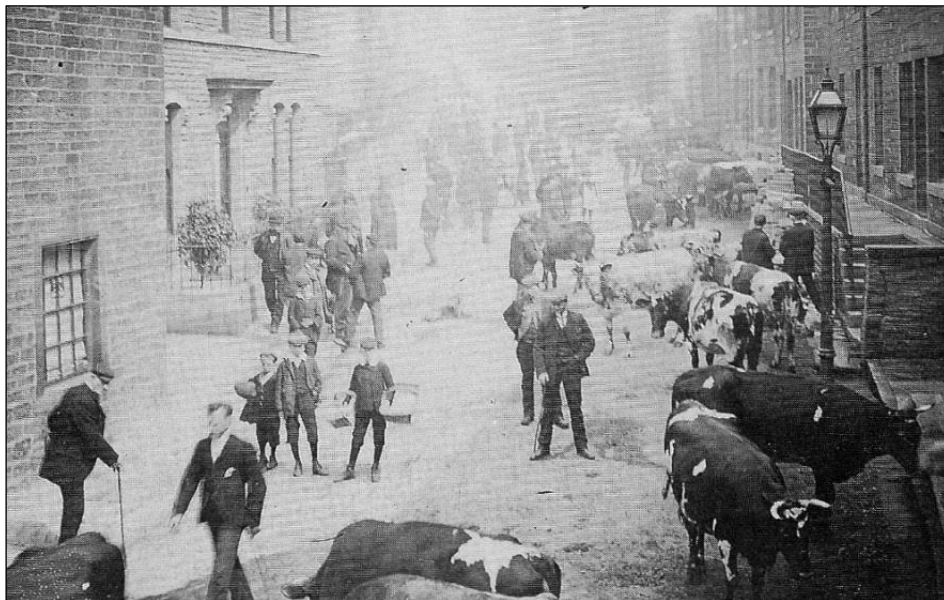
SERIOUS CARRIAGE ACCIDENT AT HOLMFIRTH. –

About seven o'clock last Tuesday night, Julia Barrow, a girl about eight years old, daughter of James Barrow, of Lane, was severely injured by being run over by a waggonette, near Upperbridge. The waggonette, containing several persons, was being driven by a young man employed by Mr. Hugh Holmes, and the girl ran across the road, just passing in front of it, out of the way of a lorry that was passing the other way. The horse knocked her down, and one of the wheels ran over her side, breaking two of her ribs. She was taken home and attended by a surgeon, and she is likely to recover.

This however was not the end of his problems as in September of the same year a further incident occurred when;

On Thursday afternoon (10th September 1874) a boy about twelve years old, grandson of Mr. Samuel Wadsworth, of Park Head, was knocked down by a cab driven by a youth in the employ of Mr Hugh Holmes, which was conveying a wedding party from Holmbridge through the town. The boy's ear and left leg were grazed in the fall, and one of the wheels passed over his right leg, injuring his thigh, knee, and lower part of the leg, but no bones were broken. No blame is attached to the driver as the boy was running in front of the cab. He was attended by Mr. Berry, surgeon, and is likely to recover.

Taking everything into consideration Hugh Holmes appears to have been a man somewhat prone to accidents of one sort or another.



The 'May Fair' held in Station Road. The Druids' Hall is just visible at the top of the picture. The following picture is taken from almost the same position.

The May Fair of 1873 came and went, but not before Mr. John Roberts, a farmer of Farnley-Tyas was placed in custody for being drunk and riotous. It was proved that

he had been drinking in several local public-houses during the fair before finally going to the Druids' Hall where he broke the lock of a door and took away the key, and when approached by a policeman he struck him with his crutch. He was fined 5s. plus 5s. for the lock with 8s. expenses which was paid out of money found on him. On a happier note, the fair went well, and whilst the attractions were limited to a few nut and ginger-bread stalls and a drum and fife band, the ball held at the Druids' Hall was well attended by the younger members of Holmfirth.



Station Road and Druids' Hall about 1900. Stable (now demolished) can be seen just protruding beyond the row of houses on the right.

Holmfirth railway station was situated about 200 yards above the Druids' Hall and on the 28th August it was the scene of a fatal accident.

James Hobson was at the station loading his cart with oil cake from a waggon on the line, when a train which was standing close to the cart began to move. This startled his horse and turned the cart, the shaft of which hit Mr Hobson. The horse was also thrown down and in the process kicked him on the head which resulted in his death.

Mr. George Ediss, a local surgeon was called but could be of no assistance. The body was taken back to the Druids' Hall where an inquest was held the following day. Mr. Ediss who appeared on the 1861 census as being resident at the Druids' Hall along with his wife, son, daughter and servant did, in July of 1862, make an unsuccessful application for the post of surgeon of the Deanhouse Workhouse. He subsequently wrote to the Board of Guardians complaining of his rejection giving his address as Lane-end House, Holmfirth. He wrote;

Gentleman , - Having offered myself to you and been an unsuccessful candidate for the surgeocy (sic) of Deanhouse Workhouse, I beg leave respectfully to withdraw my name from the contest, feeling satisfied that no gentleman or educated man could with credit and advantage to himself hold office over which you preside.

The letter, it was said, gave rise to some laughter amongst the Board members.

An inn-keepers license for the building had first been applied for, and rejected, in 1854 by Abraham Hayley and further applications made in subsequent years were also rejected. However on the 27th August 1873 Hugh Holmes applied once again. The application was reported in the Huddersfield Chronicle and gives a further insight into the structure of the building etc. It read as follows;

'HUGH HOLMES, WOOLDALE, keeper of the Druids' Hall, Lane-ends, applied for an innkeepers' licence. – Mr. S. Learoyd, who appeared for him, said the strong recommendation that had been urged by the other applicants for licences was that their houses were so very much more superior to the other public houses in the neighbourhood; but the houses which were nearest to his client were very good and respectable houses, and he believed they would very much prefer to have a neighbour who possessed a spirit licence than having a beer-house near them. The house in respect to which he applied was built by the members of the Order of Druids. The society of Druids had accumulated a considerable sum of money which would yield them a substantial interest. In the year 1852, considering that there was requirement for a house where the various friendly societies could meet, and which should be considered a friendly societies' house, they determined to put up such a house; but they determined it should not be simply a house that met the requirements of the Druids merely, but should be at the same time a house which should invite to it commercial men, and have connected with it real good stabling. He would leave their worships to judge as to whether the builders of the house really did satisfy their good intentions by asking them to look at the two photographs of the house that had been taken. (Photographs produced.) It had been a beer-house since 1853, and for five or six years it had been kept by Hugh

Holmes, who was a tenant of the Order of Druids; and he appeared there as well instructed by the committee of the Order of Druids as by Mr. Holmes. The house at present simply made a return to the Druids of three per cent, although they spent £850 in the erection of the house. Applicant paid £21 a year rent. The house was built with the intention of making it a commercial house. It contained, on the ground floor, two large kitchens and four really good sitting rooms, well furnished. It contained on the second floor; five good bed-rooms which were beautifully fitted up; and over the whole was a large room which was used by the society – a room so large that it was capably of conveniently seating 500 persons at once. The house had somehow fallen under the prejudice that property sales cannot be held at non-licenced houses; and it would be a boon if such a beautiful room could be made eligible for the holding of auction sales and various meetings. One point of recommendation was that the officers of the Rifle Volunteers had recently taken the top room to store their arms in and use as their drill-room. He was instructed to say that the licence asked for would comprise the whole house, and that there would be no separate letting; indeed there was no separate letting now. The applicant was the only cab proprietor in Holmfirth. He stables seven horses in his own yard, and also takes the yard of the Crown Inn in which to keep his cab and omnibus. There were two highly respectable houses about 150 yards distant, the Victoria Inn in one direction and the Friendship Inn in the other. The applicant's certificate was signed by two clergymen, among other gentlemen. – The bench granted the licence upon condition that the whole of the property should remain in the tenancy of Holmes.'

This article was also the first of many which refer to the use of the hall by the 32nd Holmfirth Rifle Volunteer Corps as their drill room.

The day of the May Fair 1874 came round once again, and with it further cases of drunkenness and disorder. On this occasion involving Charles Hall, a collier of Darton, near Barnsley, and John McGowan, a labourer from Huddersfield who were charged that on Tuesday, the 19th May they were drunk and riotous at the Druids' Hall. It was said that both Hall and McGowan were at the house in the afternoon and that McGowan was cheating some of the company of money. Hall intervened and told him to pay this back, when McGowan and his companions attacked him. There was a fight during which McGowan bit a piece of Hall's lip. The police said they were both drunk, but that McGowan was the worst. They were each fined 5s. and costs, and the magistrates advised Hall to return home as soon as possible.

The house, or cottage, attached to the Druids' Hall and adjacent to the stable and coach house had been occupied by various families since its opening in 1852.

Whilst the first occupants are unknown, the census of 1861 shows it as being the residence of George Newall Ediss, surgeon and member of the Royal College, along with his wife Sarah, his son George, his daughter Winifred and one servant, Elizabeth Charlesworth. He had previously qualified as an apothecary on the 16th January 1839 and became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons Eng. in 1847. He was appointed the medical officer of Southsea for the Portsea Island Union on the 25th March of that year. He does however appear to have led a rather chequered career as in January of 1854, after a complaint was made against him for neglect of duty, he was subsequently dismissed from that post. This may have prompted his move to Holmfirth from where, in March 1858, he placed the following notice in the Huddersfield Chronicle, when he gave his address as Spring Grove, Holmfirth.

A CARD.

IT having been currently reported in this neighbourhood, and believed by many credulous individuals, that I, **GEORGE NEWELL EDISS**, M.R.C.S., Eng., &c., of Spring Grove, Holmfirth, contemplate leaving my present abode, I take this opportunity of publicly denying its truth. As the origin of the report emanated in a brain diseased, with a view to my professional injury, its further circulation is actionable.

Whilst appearing on the census of 1861 as being resident at the Druids' Hall, all be it temporarily, it cannot be said with certainty that he was not in fact already living nearby at Lane-end House.

Later, in 1871, he suffered a serious riding accident when, on returning home from visiting patients, his horse fell upon him causing serious injuries to his back and spine which rendered him in a very precarious state. He was by now residing at Eldon House.

It must be assumed that he had serious financial problems as on the 6th September, 1877 he was mentioned in the Huddersfield Chronicle when the following notice was issued;

BUSINESS FAILURES.

FAILURE OF A SURGEON AND APOTHECARY.
A petition was filed on Tuesday at the Huddersfield Bankruptcy Court on behalf of Messrs. Geo. Newell Ediss, surgeon and apothecary, Holmfirth, with liabilities amounting to £200. Messrs. Iveson and Meller are appointed solicitors in the matter, and Mr. Chas. Dyson, High Bailiff, County Court, Holmfirth, is appointed the receiver.

He finally moved to Burton-upon-Irwell, Lancashire, where he died in 1896 at the age of eighty-six.

By 1871 the census shows that the tenancy of the cottage had changed to John Taylor, a bookbinder, along with his wife, four young daughters and his son Charlie, aged two. On the 29th of May 1874, Charlie, who was now three years old, was reported to have been playing near the edge of the cricket field, at Bridge, when he fell into the water below the weir, which was said to be very deep at that point. He was however quickly rescued by some men near the place, 'but not before he had sunk three times.' It was however declared that despite his misadventure he was likely to recover.

Trouble continued to plague Hugh Holmes when objections were made of foul smells originating from his stable. Mr. William Crawshaw had complained 'that Mr. Hugh Holmes, cab proprietor, had allowed a nuisance to exist in the form of a bad smell emanating from his stable, which penetrated into the adjoining house belonging to Mr Crawshaw and which was occupied by Miss Short.'



Station Road, Holmfirth opposite the Druids' Hall, about 1900. The coach house or stable, now demolished, can be seen at the extreme left of the picture. (The white building)

The Nuisance Inspector confirmed this, and Hugh Holmes was ordered to plaster the wall of the stable and to clean it out thoroughly every week.

It was also stated that he kept a large number of vehicles on the road in front of the house which were proving dangerous to people at night and that he had previously been given notice to remove them, but had failed to do so.

Hygiene was evidently not a high priority of Hugh Holmes as two years later the inspector also gave notice that the defective state of the 'privy accommodation' was to be brought to the attention of the committee of the Druids' Order.

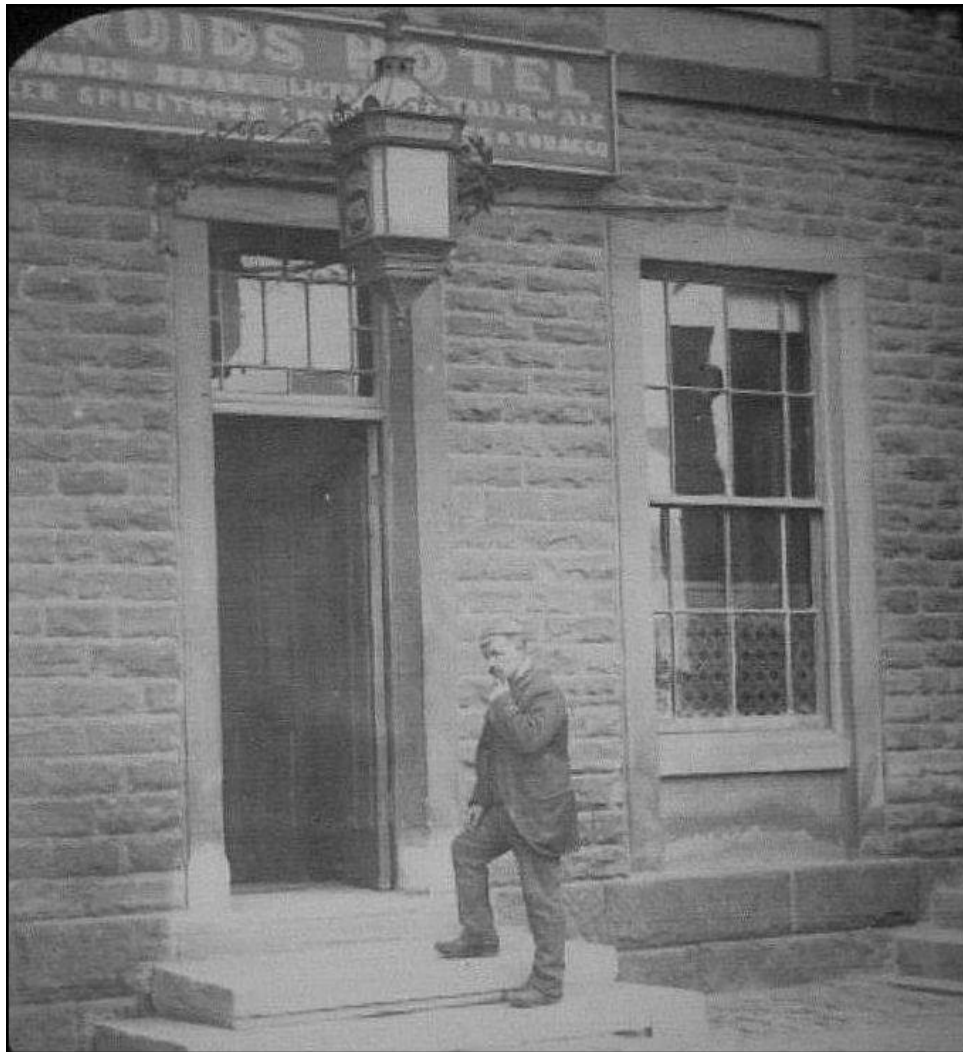
It was several months' later that following a heated argument between Tom Turner, of Underbank and George Beaumont that trouble raised its head once more within the Druids' Hall. During the quarrel, which related to an old dispute, Beaumont was struck a heavy blow to the face which knocked him down and was kicked on the head five or six times. Efforts were made by other onlookers to resolve the situation and it was thought that if they had not intervened Beaumont would probably have been killed.

He was taken home immediately and attended to by a doctor, but it was only after his condition deteriorated that the police were called and a warrant for the arrest of Tom Taylor issued. He was remanded in custody for a week on account of Beaumont's critical condition.

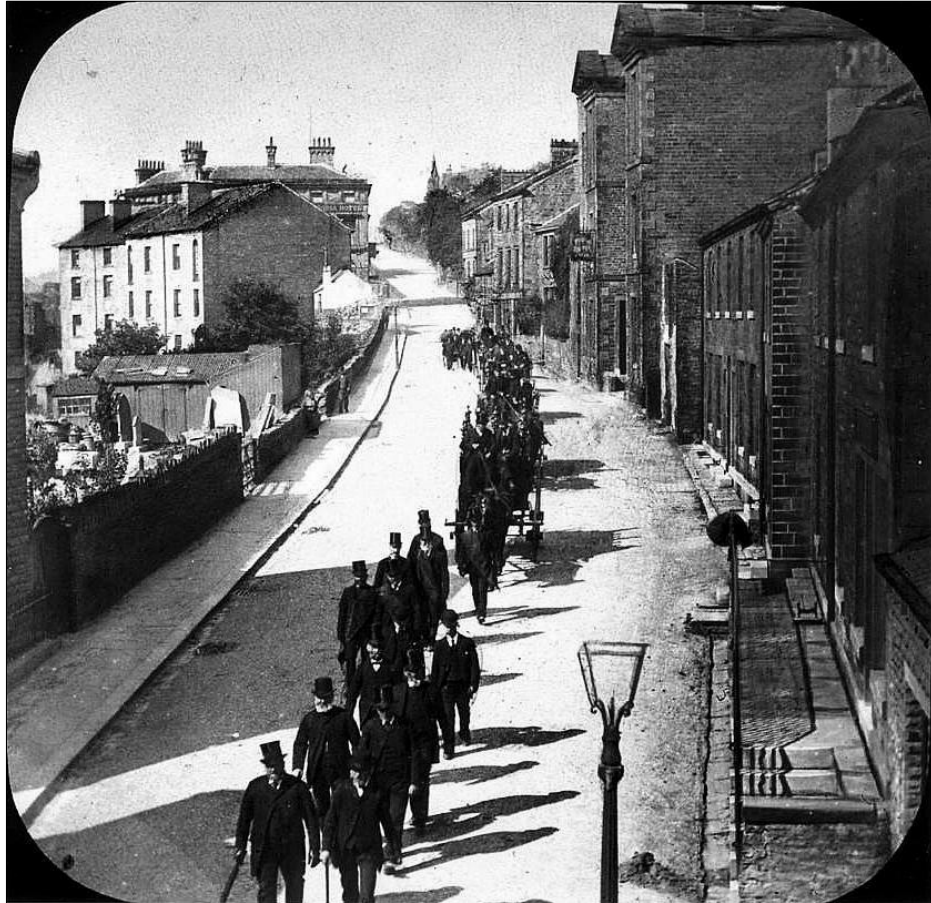
It was now twenty-four years since the Druids had opened their hall to its members and to the general public when, at the annual gathering of the Holmfirth branch of the Order of Druids held in December 1876, it was announced that they had now paid off every farthings of debt on the hall and also had a good surplus in hand in the bank.

The hall, they were delighted to report, was now the absolute property of the Order, the debt owed to Louisa Hinchliff having been paid off three years earlier on the 10th November 1873.

The Druids' Hall had been the home of the officers and men of the 32nd West Yorkshire Rifle Volunteers for just over three years when, on the 23rd November 1876, after a short parade attended by about forty men, they were invited by Captain Dyson to his home at Elmwood. They formed in procession outside the hall and marched to his house under the leadership of Lieutenant Nelson where, on their arrival, they were treated to sandwiches, beer and other refreshments and after a very enjoyable evening marched back to Holmfirth.



*Outside the Druids' Hotel, about 1895. The name of the landlord,
James Bray, can be clearly seen over the door.*



Druids' Hall and Station Road 1890. The Victoria Hotel (now demolished) and the Spire (now removed) on the Alms Houses can be seen in the distance, with a monumental masons opposite the Druids' Hall.

It was not unusual during this period for inquests to be held at local inns and hotels, and in this respect the Druids' Hotel was no different. One had previously been recorded as having been held there in 1861 following then death of James Hobson at the railway station and a further one was reported in November of 1876. The details of this inquest however give an interesting insight into the crowded living and sleeping arrangement of the working classes common in the Victorian era. The article which appeared in the Huddersfield Chronicle on Saturday the 18th November stated that;

'On Wednesday an inquest was held at the Druids' Hotel, before Mr. Barstow, the coroner, and a jury, into the death of an infant, eight weeks old, named Alice Helen Booth, the child of Jonathan Booth, weaver, of Cliffe. Mr Benjamin Mellor was foreman of the jury. Evidence was given that the child slept in bed with its father and mother and a boy about four years old, the father and boy being at the foot of the bed. At half-past six on Sunday morning the child cried, and the mother gave it the breast, and fell asleep. At half-past seven the mother awoke again, and noticing that the child was still, she examined it, and found it quite dead. A woman who laid out the body stated that there was a discoloured mark on the back of its head, and another on the small of its back, and it seemed to have had a fit. The verdict was that the child was found in bed, without marks of violence or injury, and that death resulted from natural causes, probably from a fit.'

Festivities began early in 1877, when both Messrs. Jas. Watkinson & Son of Washpit Mills, Holmfirth and Messrs. J. & J. Longbottom, iron-founders, of Bridge foundry entertained their workforce with a splendid dinner provided by Mr. and Mrs. Holmes at the Druids' Hall. The treat by J. Watkinson's was held on Saturday, the 13th January and was hosted by Mr. T.B. Watkinson who opened the proceedings by wishing the one hundred and eighty workers present, a 'Happy New Year,' and expressing a hope that all would be prosperous and that they would all enjoy themselves. He then called upon the band to open the entertainment with a galop, 'which was done in good style.' A toast to 'The success and prosperity of the firm' was given by Mr. J. Longbottom after which the worker gave three hearty cheers. Mr. Watkinson responded by thanking them for their good wishes and said that he could not adequately express his feelings to them, and that he hoped that the same good feeling that had existed between the employers and the employees would continue. Shortly afterwards he left the hall in order to catch the train to Huddersfield.

At the close of the proceedings, and after a vote of thanks to Mr Holmes and his wife, Hugh Holmes responded and spoke of the workpeople as being the 'flower of Holmfirth,' remarking that no man need be ashamed of entertaining such a respectable company. The chairman closed the proceedings by saying that whilst this was the first of such entertainment, he hoped it would not be the last, and that it would become an annual event, and true to his word, the workers were given a similar treat the following January.

During the evening cigars, beer, oranges etc., were liberally supplied and the evening's entertainment closed by the work-force singing the National Anthem.

This treat was followed in February by a similar one provided by J. & J.W. Longbottom, but on this occasion only twenty workers were present. Following the meal a toast was proposed by Mr. J.L. Hinchliffe wishing, 'Success and

prosperity to the firm of J. & J.W. Longbottom.’ The evening concluded with songs rendered by Messrs. Joe Booth, Charlie Gledhill, Thomas Littlewood and other employees. Recitations were also given by Messrs. Dick Howarth and Joe Longbottom and the workers parted company at about eleven o’clock.

By 1878 Hugh Holmes had been landlord of the Druids’ Hall for seven years when his death was reported in the Leeds Mercury;

‘SUDDEN DEATH’

‘An awfully sudden death occurred at Holmfirth on Tuesday Morning (23rd April 1878). Mr. Hugh Holmes landlord of the Druids’ Hall Hotel, Holmfirth, had just sat down to breakfast when he commenced coughing, and before medical aid could be obtained he expired. Disease of the heart is said to be the cause of his death. Deceased had been at Selby on the previous day.’

Mesmerism as performed by Mr Sugden in 1854, and by Captain Hudson in 1855, had been a source of some amusement and amazement to the audiences who had been entertained by them at the Druids’ Hall.

During the week commencing the 6th December 1880 yet another course and demonstration was given, this time by Professor Balme. He was assisted by three men and four women who, under his influence went through a number of amusing scenes. It was reported that the audience, which consisted of a number of young people were ‘both astonished and amused at the proceedings.’ Whilst the professor, who was a native of a neighbouring town appeared skilled in the science, it was said he had little success in his endeavours to mesmerise the inhabitants of Holmfirth.

New Year treats which had by now become a regular highlight of the year for the local workers were often held at the Druids’ Hall. On Saturday, the 8th January, Messrs. Thorp and Sons, Dob Royd Mills, held their annual celebration there, when sixty of their work force sat down to tea. The proceedings concluded with an evening of dancing, singing and reciting, presided over by Mr. Heap the engineer, and whilst there were no reports of drunken behaviour it did however continue to be a problem in the district as on the 15th August, Jesse Booth was charged with refusing to quit the Druids’ Hotel and was fined 5s. with costs.

It was in November of 1883 that discussions took place at the Druids’ Hall in connection with the proposed amalgamation of the town-ships of Cartworth, Uppertong and Wooldale. It was thought by some that this would lead to more

economy in the three areas, but everyone was not convinced of this argument. Following a suggestion by one of the rate payers present that a house to house canvas be carried out an amendment was proposed that the matter be left in the hands of the Board to do as they thought best. A second amendment was then proposed that they consult the other Boards and have a meeting of rate payers before doing anything. The first amendment was carried by 48 votes and the second by 23. A further meeting was held at the Free Wesleyan School Room on the 17th January 1884, when it was agreed, after long discussion, that a new district should be formed and that it be called the Holmfirth District. Mr J.S. Davey, one of the members of the inquiry, closed the proceedings by wishing every prosperity on the town of Holmfirth.

Workpeople's treats had by now become an accepted feature in the life of the workers of Holmfirth. Messrs. B. Mellor and Sons was one of the mills in the valley who regularly provided dinner and entertainment for their employees.

B. Mellor's was one of the oldest established mills in Holmfirth and on the 12th January 1884 they treated their workers to a substantial meal at the Druids' Hall, which was provided by the landlord Mr. Michael Redfearn, and which, it was said, was the thirty-fifth annual dinner since the founding of the business. However, this was the first occasion that the dinner had been held at the Druids' Hall. In previous years the Crown Hotel had been the venue. After the removal of the tables, dancing commenced and songs were sung by Messrs. Sam Beaumont, J. Barraclough, M. Knight and others and a pleasant evening was spent by all the workers. Further dinners were provided by the firm in January 1885/6/7, when about eighty members of the workforce sat down to excellent suppers served again by Michael Redfearn.

The Holmfirth Company of Rifle Volunteers had been formed in May 1860 and had initially used the deep valley leading from Holmbridge to the Moss, not far from Ramsden as their practice ground. However in the eleven years prior to 1884 they had used the Druids' Hall for their drill practice. This had proved to be an unsatisfactory arrangement as, due to the size of the hall, it was only possible to drill half the present company of eighty-four volunteers at once. The previous year the company had been encamped with the rest of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the West Riding Regiment at Pensarn when it had been decided to make an effort to raise funds to build a drill hall of their own. With this in mind a bazaar was planned and held at the Town Hall on Monday, the 26th May 1884 with the intention of raising funds for the project. Several stalls were set up and a large number of entertainments provided which included, Volunteer Christy's Minstrels, living waxworks, animated shadows, a living head, a German dwarf, shooting galleries etc. and music was provided by the Holmfirth Philharmonic Band. The cost of the

new building was estimated to be about £800.0.0 of which £100.0.0 had already been promised by gentlemen who took an interest in the movement and so a further £700.0.0 was required. The bazaar raised about £500.0.0, and by the time the foundation stone was laid on the 24th April 1891, this with interest accrued and money raised by voluntary effort, had increased by £107.10.0 to over £600.0.0. The opening ceremony took place on Monday, the 4th April 1892 and with it ended the Volunteer Corps association with the Druids' Hall.

However during the interim period between the inception of the plan to build a new Drill Hall and its completion, the Holmfirth Volunteer Corps continued to use the Druids' Hall and on the 1st January 1885 a presentation was made to Mr. James Farmer on his retirement from the rank of drill instructor. A large number of volunteers, kitted out in full dress, attended the presentation and paraded in the room. He was then presented with a purse containing £42.7s.9d by Lieut. George Noble, the purse was inscribed, "Presented to Mr. James Farmer, by the past and present members of the E. Company Second Volunteer Battalion, West Riding Regiment, on the retirement from the rank of drill-instructor." It was said of him, that he had served under Sir Colin Campbell and had gone with that General through the China war, and had been awarded three medals.

The Company, which now numbered one hundred and one volunteers, the largest in its history, held their annual dinner and prize giving at the Druids' Hall on Saturday, the 18th December 1886 when just over a hundred men sat down for a meal in the hall, which was decorated with flags. Following the dinner the tables were removed and the number of guests was increased substantially by the addition of the friends of the officers, the wives, sweethearts and friends of the men. Prizes were then presented for shooting, attendance at drill and to new recruits. The proceedings were finally concluded after singing and dancing at 11pm.

It was at one of the last special events to be held by the Holmfirth Volunteers at the Druids' Hall that Mrs. T. Beardsell, on behalf of the ladies of Holmfirth and District, presented a silver cup to the officers and men of E. Company. The cup bore the inscription "Ladies Cup, presented to E. Company, 2nd Volunteer Battalion, West Riding Regiment, for the highest aggregate in A and B shooting competition, Holmfirth, November 1888." The name of Lance-Sergeant J.W.B. Shaw was inscribed on the opposite side as he had won the cup in 1888.

Mrs Beardsell in presenting the trophy said;

'Mr Chairman, Captain Mellor, non-commissioned officers, and men, ladies and gentlemen, in the unavoidable absence of Miss Kate Mellor, I have been requested

to present a ladies challenge cup to Captain Mellor, on behalf of the ladies of Holmfirth and district, for the E. Company 2nd Volunteer Battalion (Duke of Wellington's) West Riding Regiment. I hope this cup will be an inducement to more practice in target shooting, then, as a result, we shall have more proficient volunteers. I hope the volunteers will enjoy the contest each year as it comes round. I have great pleasure in presenting the cup to Captain Mellor.'

Her presentation was met with general applause.



5th Battalion Duke of Wellington's T.A. on parade outside the Druids' Hall 1909

By August 1895 all the original trustees of The Briton's Pride Lodge had died, with the exception of Joseph Hinchliff and as consequence of this a meeting was held on the 3rd August 1895 when it was unanimously resolved to appoint further trustees to replace those deceased. These were confirmed on the 14th December of that year.

The Druids' Hall had first opened its doors in 1852 and by 1893 several of its landlords and customers had been involved in cases involving either litigation or general disorder. George Lindley, of Rycroft was the first to be mentioned following an attack on Emanuel Booth. Lindley claimed he was in the Druids' Hall ballroom at the time of the assault but this was proved to be false. He was fined 5s. with 13s.6d costs.

In October of 1876 James Dyson, a farmer of Netherthong was charged with leaving his horse and spring cart standing opposite the building. He claimed he had been visiting the hall from half-past one until ten minutes to two. He was fined 1s. and costs.

The first case of litigation to be reported was between Hugh Holmes, the innkeeper of the Druids' Hall and Charles Lockwood, a local manufacturer, for damages of £50.0.0 sustained by Holmes in consequent of a collision between a white-chapel dog cart he was driving and a spring cart driven by an employee of Charles Lockwood. The collision occurred near Berry Brow when on the 28th December 1875, Hugh Holmes was thrown from the cart along with his fellow passenger Frances Watson. When he recovered consciousness he was at home having sustained several broken ribs. The accident, he said, had involved him in considerable expense as he had paid £3.0.0 to a nurse who attended him night and day for three weeks. He also paid the bills of a doctor who temporarily attended him at the scene of the accident and £3.7s.6d to Mr Trotter, the surgeon, who attended him three weeks at his home. Besides this it had cost him £4.5s.0 for the repair of the shafts of his dog-cart and he stated that due to his injuries the public-house business had also suffered a loss. The jury after retiring for half an hour found in his favour and awarded him £35.0.0.

The next to appear in court was Joseph Battye Eastwood, a chimney sweep of Lane End who was charged, 'that on the 8th June 1882 he did assault James Kinder, cab driver, of the Druids' Hall,' he was fined 2s.6d and costs. On the 15th August 1883, Jesse Booth was accused of refusing to quit the Druids' Hotel and was fined 5s. and costs, and on the 4th July 1885 George Battye, a cart driver from Golcar was charged with being drunk at the Druids' Hotel, Holmfirth. He was also fined 5s. with 8s. costs. All in all the hotel proved to be the setting for a certain amount of general disorder.

Michael Redfearn, the landlord of the Druids' Hotel from 1879 until 1889 was not immune from court appearances, first as a witness and then as the defendant.

The first case he was involved in was the theft of 40 yards of calico by William Comery of Holmfirth, on the 23rd October 1883. It was alleged that Comery stole the calico, which had been left in the bar of the Victoria Hotel, and subsequently sold twelve yards to Michael Redfearn for 4s.0d. He also sold twelve yards to John Pickles of Meltham, and the remainder to Eliza Redfearn, the sister-in-law of Michael Redfearn. When arrested by Police Constable Ingham he was found to have 16s.10½d on his person. The magistrates said that they had no doubt of Comery's guilt, but as it was his first offence they would be lenient with him and sentenced him to be committed to Wakefield prison for six weeks.

Six months later Michael Redfearn appeared in court charged with owing £4.10s.0, being the balance owed to Tom Haigh, a butcher from Meltham, on the sale of a horse to the defendant. It was said that Tom Haigh wanted £6.0.0 for the horse but that Michael Redfearn had offered him only £5.0.0, which he would not accept. Finally it was agreed that he would accept £5.0.0 and as much cloth as would make his little boy a suit. It was said of Michael Redfearn that he often dealt in cloth. Following a long case which occupied a large portion of the day the Judge ultimately gave a verdict in favour of Tom Haigh and awarded him £4.0.0.

It is interesting to note that Michael Redfearn was reported as often dealing in cloth and brings into question whether, in the previous case, he was aware of the theft of the calico and was in fact a receiver of stolen goods.

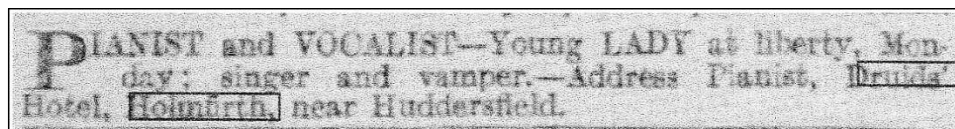
Drunken behaviour continued to occur in and around the building giving rise to James Kinder, a labourer from Holmfirth being charged with being drunk and disorderly at the Druids' Hotel on the 22nd August 1887. The case was proved by Police Constable Alderman and he was fined 5s. with costs. James Kinder had previously been mentioned in a court case in 1882, following an assault on him by Joseph Battye Eastwood.

Finally a case of disorder was reported involving Joe Wood, who was described as being the manager of the Druids' Hall. The case was reported as follows in the Huddersfield Chronicle on the 9th October 1893;

'A PUBLIC HOUSE MANAGER FINED. – Joe Wood, described as manager, Druids' Hotel, was summoned for being drunk on licensed premises, but he did not put in an appearance. Police-constable Chatterton stated that on Saturday, the 30th ult., at 6.40pm., he visited the Druids' Hotel, in company with Inspector Calcraft and Police-constable Satchwell, when he saw defendant in the bar parlour drunk. Satchwell and witness had previously visited the house at 5.30, and he was

then very drunk. Superintendent Pickard explained that defendant was managing the Druids' Hotel for Mr. Hiram Mellor, and Wood applied for a temporary transfer of license in August, but he (the superintendent) objected to it on account of defendant's conduct. Wood had paid the valuation to Mellor, the outgoing tenant, and was now waiting for a respectable man to be found to take the house. Previous to taking the house defendant bore a good character with his late employers. Fined 5s. and 5s.6d. costs.'

During the Victorian period most public houses and inns had what was described as a music room where some form of entertainment could be provided, normally in the form of a pianist and vocalist. This appears to have been the case at the Druids' Hotel as the following advertisement appeared in the Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser on the 12th July 1894;



Society was now changing having progressed from the Victorian into the Edwardian era, and the Druidic movement along with many other Friendly Societies was falling into decline. It was at a meeting held on the 17th February 1906, at which over seventy members of Briton's Pride Lodge were present that it was proposed and accepted, that the Druids' Hall and adjacent buildings should be sold by public auction.

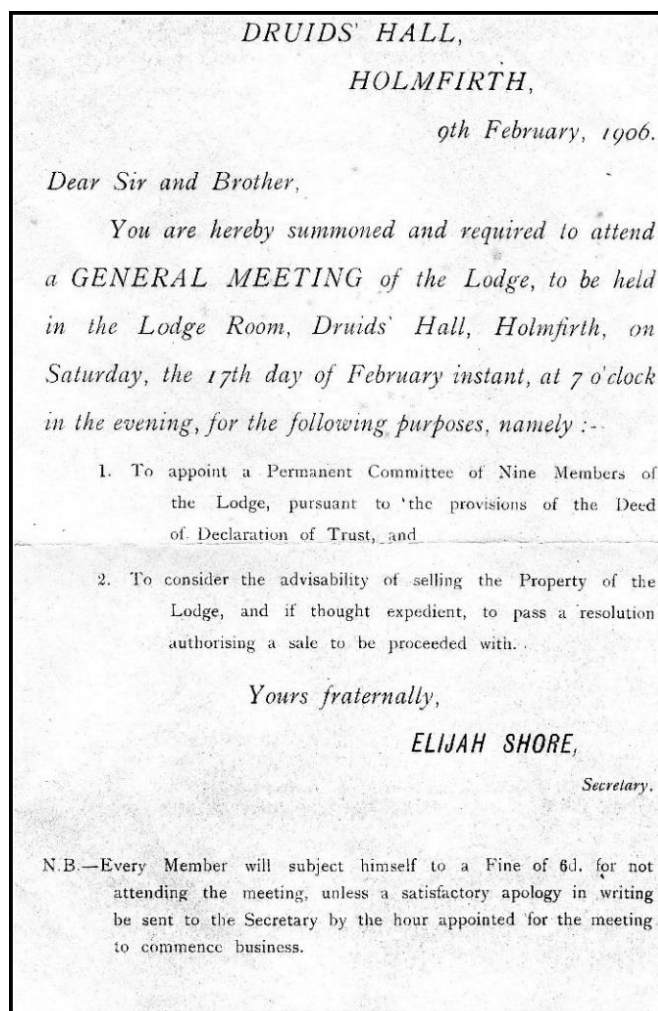
A circular had previously been sent to all the members of the lodge on the 9th February 1906 referring to the intended sale, and at the meeting held on the 17th February, chaired by Brother G.H. Tinker, it was proposed by Brother Morton Stansfield and seconded by Brother Joshua Bray;

'that the following nine members of the lodge be and they are hereby appointed a permanent committee pursuant to the deeds of declaration of trust dated 27th day of May 1846 namely, George Bullock, Ben Bray, Joseph Beardsell, John Booth, James Mettrick, Firth Tinsdeall, Joe Bray, Seth Turner and James Turner.'

It was then proposed by Baldwin Holmes and seconded by Brother George Battye and carried unanimously;

'That the permanent committee be and they are authorized and requested to sell and dispose of the land with the Hotel and other Buildings erected thereon belonging to the lodge by public auction or private contract at such time and for such a price as to them shall seem most expedient.'

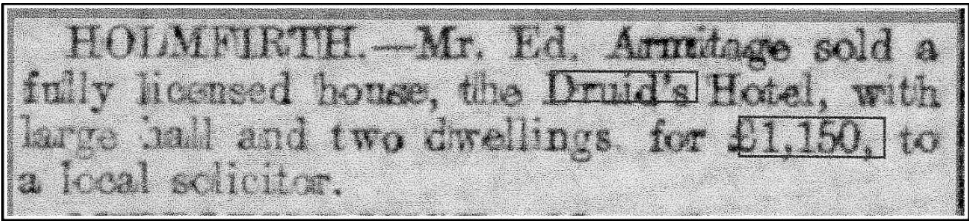
Mr J.H. Turner, Solicitor was to deal with the sale. The following month it was proposed that Brother Joseph Beardsell and Brother James Mettrick be appointed Treasures, and it must be assumed they dealt with the sale of the building.



Summons relating to sale of Druids' Hall in 1906

The auction of the property, which took place on Thursday the 29th March, 1906 was advertised as a fully-licensed public house known as the Druids' Hotel,

together with brew-house, two dwelling houses, stable, carriage house, outbuildings, yards and vacant ground and was sold in equal shares to John Edward Heap of Honley, solicitor, and Daniel Stockwell, innkeeper of Upperbridge, Holmfirth, for the sum of £1150.00, the land at this time continued to be leased from the Lord of the Manor.



Notice of sale of Druids' Hotel in Leeds Mercury, 31st March 1906.

Daniel Stockwell was the innkeeper at the King's Head, known locally as The White Door, an inn dating from 1706, which stood opposite the toll bar house at Upper Bridge in Holmfirth. Regrettably, following an accident to the building, it fell into disrepair and was derelict for some time before being demolished in 1969.

<div>45</div> <div>Druid's Hotel Holmfirth</div> <div>Mr. Albert Stockwell Heap to Mr. Young Walker</div> <div>INVENTORY and VALUATION</div> <div>of Household Furnishings, Trade fixtures Fittings & Effects, Stock in Trade, Licenses to be at above place for transfer</div> <div>January 30 1907 31</div> <div>Attest: Stockwell Holmfirth Witness: Mr. A. Stockwell + Church Street Huddersfield</div>	<div>46</div> <div>Final Summary.</div> <div>Household Furniture & Trade Fittings & Effects as assessed by Mr. A. Stockwell as Valuer</div> <div>70 0 0</div> <div>Licenses on £20.8.3 paid 252 to Run to Oct 10th</div> <div>7 7 10</div> <div>Stock in Trade</div> <div>28 13 4</div> <div>Notes that taken into account Each payment proper; Summa 400 + from Bank</div> <div>Alexander Stockwell</div> <div>£ 81 8 11</div> <div>Mode of Payment.</div> <div>1 Bank of England 50. 0. 0</div> <div>1 " 10. 0. 0</div> <div>4 " £s. 20. 0. 0</div> <div>Gold 1. 10. 0</div> <div>81. 10. 0</div> <div>Change 1. 1</div> <div>£ 81 8 11</div>
---	--

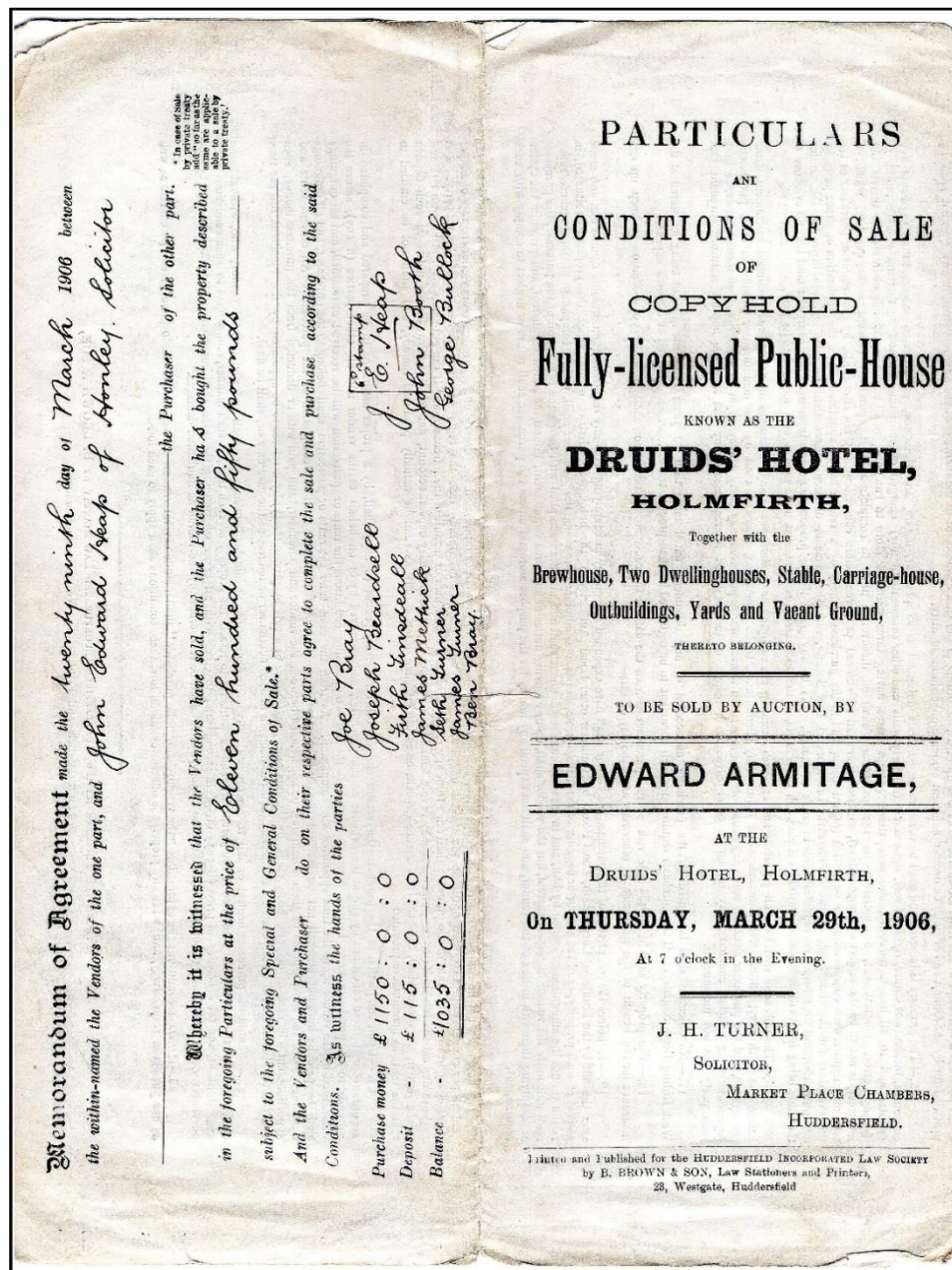
William Sykes & Sons Inventory and Stock Valuation for transfer of license 1907

	56
Summary	
Bedroom	ε .
No 1 Front Bedroom	τ ε l .
No 2 do	τ ε l
Entrance	- - .
Lodge Room	ε i e
Dark Room	l .
Back Wash Kitchen	ε .
Stair Entrance &	ε .
Barbers Shop	τ ε l
Drug	τ ε l
Taproom	ε i a
Kitchen	u c .
Alc Cellar	τ ε l
Wine Cellar	l ε
Selling Bar	l b n
Coal Place	τ .
Outside Front	ε
	ε ε ε τ
li - ab - w.	
ε n - u r	
wb - ne t	
67.15.4	
17.17.1	

Summary of accommodation etc. at Druids' Hotel in 1907 as supplied by William Sykes and Son. Note the reference to a barbers shop and the coded valuations



*Customers standing outside the Druids' Hotel in 1908.
Perhaps the sloping pole above their heads is the sign for the
barber's shop mentioned in William Sykes's inventory of 1907.*



Conditions of sale of Druids' Hotel showing amounts paid by J.E. Heap

COPYRIGHT.—ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL

[FOR THE PERSONAL USE OF MEMBERS OF THE HUDDERSFIELD INCORPORATED LAW SOCIETY ONLY.]

PARTICULARS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE OF THE FOLLOWING PROPERTY,

All that Well-accustomed and Old-established Fully Licensed PUBLIC HOUSE known as the "DRUIDS' HOTEL," situate at Holmfirth, containing: On the Ground Floor—Entrance Passage, Commercial Room, Snug, Tap Room, Filling Bar, Kitchen, Arched Ale Cellar, and Wine and Keeping Cellars. On the First Floor—Music Room, Store Room, and Three Bedrooms. On the Second Floor—Lofty well-lighted Hall, with permanent Platform, two Ante-rooms, Lavatory, Independent Stone Staircase with entrance from main road, and communicating with hotel, also additional entrance from back road.

Together with the BREWHOUSE, TWO DWELLING-HOUSES, Four-stalled Stable with Hay Loft over, Carriage House, Outbuildings, Yards, and Vacant Ground thereto belonging, and now in the occupation of Mr. Tom Barden and others.

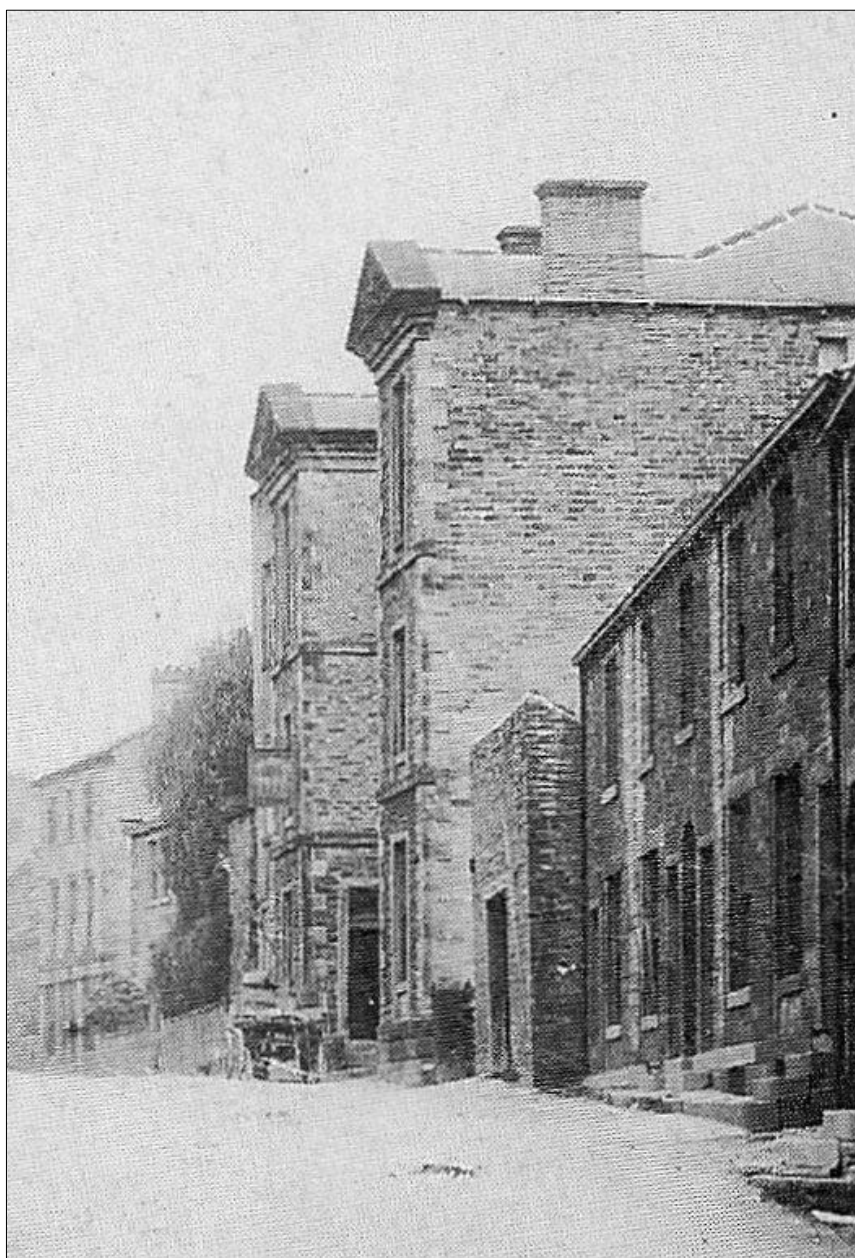
The site comprises an area of 850 square yards or thereabouts, and is Copyhold of the Manor of Wakefield, and compounded for.

N.B.—The property is sold subject to the following Special Conditions and to the General Conditions of Sale of the Huddersfield Incorporated Law Society so far as such General Conditions are not inconsistent with the Special Conditions and are applicable to the tenure and circumstances of the property.

Special Conditions of Sale hereinafter referred to.

- 1—The purchase shall be completed on the 1st day of May, 1906, at the Office of the Vendors' Solicitor, Mr. J. H. Turner, Market Place Chambers, Huddersfield.
- 2—The Abstract of Title shall be delivered or sent by post to the Purchaser, or his Solicitor, on or before the 31st day of March, 1906.
- 3—The time for delivery of requisitions and objections under General Condition 7 is seven days.
- 4—The engrossment of the Assurance to the Purchaser shall be sent to the Vendors' Solicitor five days at least before the date fixed for completion.
- 5—The Title shall commence with the Admittance dated the 27th day of May, 1846, of Joseph Heeley and others, upon a Surrender from Jonathan Thorpe and Mary, his wife.
- 6—The Purchaser shall admit (as is the fact) that the said Joseph Heeley and Job Dearnley, John Dearnley, Jonathan Hinchliffe, Abel Thorpe (of Stake Lane), Francis Sanderson, Henry Wausworth, Abel Thorpe (of Hey Gap), Jonathan Shore, Joseph Hinchliffe, William Sanderson, Jonas Dearnley, Ed Roberts, John Hirst, William Walton, Christopher Holmes, William Hirst, Simeon Fallas, James Moorhouse, William Greaves and Benjamin Robinson, mentioned in the said Admittance, and Tom Hardcastle and John Castle mentioned in the Indenture and Admittance hereinafter referred to, are now dead, and shall not be entitled to call for or require any certificates, statutory declarations, or other evidence in proof thereof, except at his own expense. The Purchaser shall also admit that such of the Vendors as are Trustees and such of them as are members of the Permanent Committee were duly and regularly appointed in all respects, and shall not be entitled to make any requisition in respect thereof, or to call for or require any evidence in support thereof, other than is afforded, as to such Trustees, by the Indenture dated the 14th day of December, 1895, under which the said Trustees were appointed, and the Admittance dated the 3rd day of January, 1896, of the said Trustees thereunder, and as to such members of the Permanent Committee by the Minutes of the said Lodge recording the General Meeting held on the 17th day of February, 1906.
- 7—The property is sold subject to such right and privilege of drainage or running of water from the adjacent premises formerly belonging to Jonathan Thorpe, and to such repairs to drains as the same is now liable or subject to.
- 8—The Vendors are the Trustees and Permanent Committee of the Ancient Order of Druids' Lodge, Holmfirth, and the concurrence of the persons beneficially interested in the purchase money shall not be required.

Description of Druids' Hotel when sold in 1906



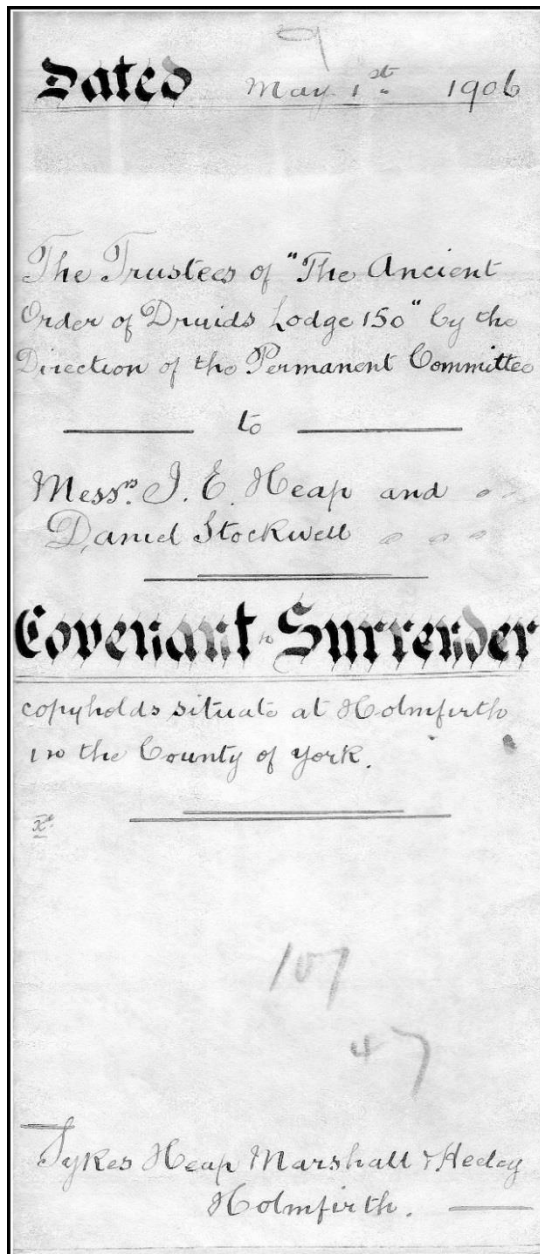
Druids' Hotel about 1906. Stable and carriage house (now demolished to form a car park) are to the right of the building and a carriage can be seen in front of it.

John Edward Heap, his partner, was a solicitor and a member of The Holme Valley Masonic Lodge No.652, who after being initiated on the 27th January 1899 subsequently became its Master in 1909. As part owner of the building he was instrumental in the negotiations for the purchase of the Druids' Hotel by the Freemasons in 1917.

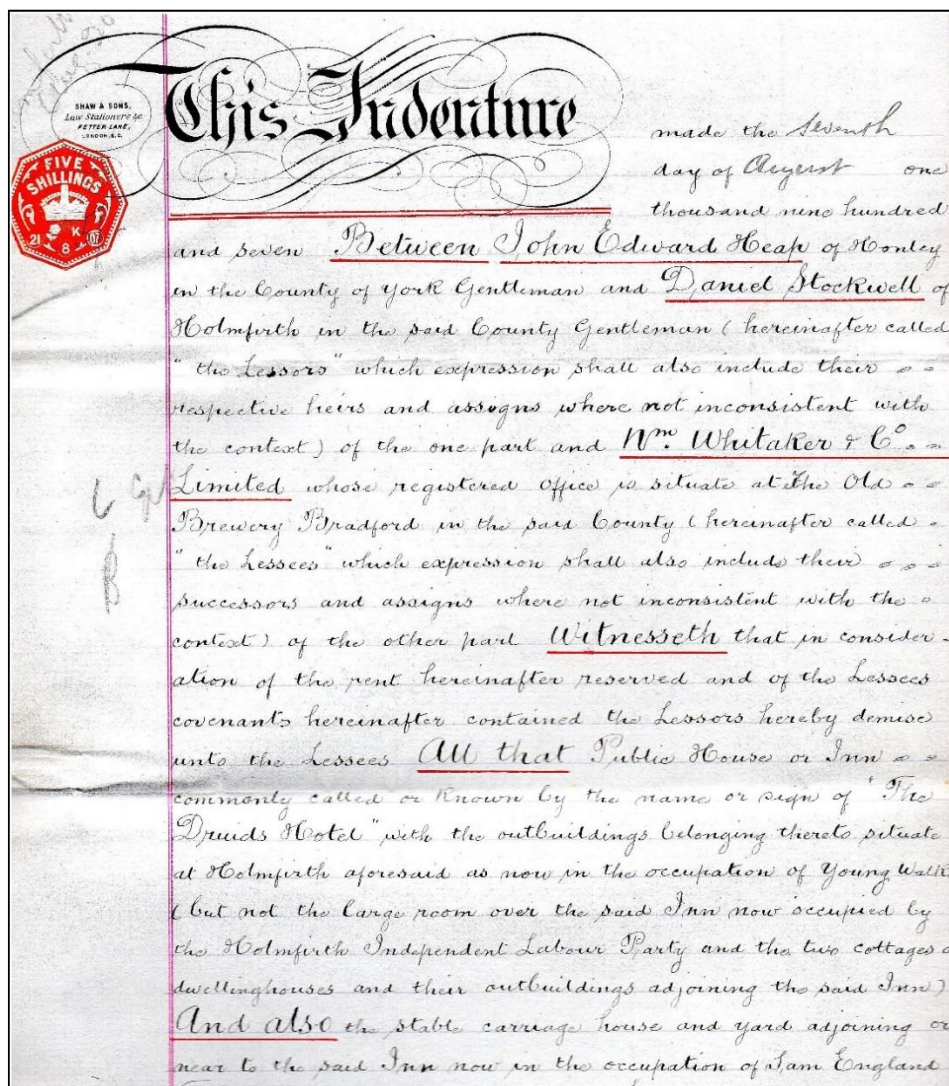
The Druids' Hotel as it was known in 1906 contained: on the ground floor - an entrance passage, commercial room, snug, tap room, filling bar, kitchen, arched ale cellar and wine and keeping cellars. On the first floor - a music room, storeroom and three bedrooms. On the second floor - a lofty well lighted hall with permanent platform, two anti-rooms, lavatory, independent stone staircase with entrance from the main road and communicating with the hotel and also an additional entrance from the back road. There were also two dwelling houses, a brew-house, a four-stalled stable with hay-loft, out buildings, yards and some vacant ground, however by this time the area covered by the hotel complex had been reduced in size to about 850 square yards or thereabouts. A barber's shop is also mentioned in William Sykes's inventory of 1907.

Daniel Stockwell, who became the licensee died on the 7th June 1908, and just prior to his death, the hotel, stabling and yard, were leased to William Whitaker & Co. Ltd., Brewers of Bradford. However, the large room, 'The Druids' Hall,' which was now occupied by the Holmfirth Independent Party and the two cottages or dwelling houses and the outbuildings adjoining the Druids' Hotel were not included in the lease. A clause in the tenancy agreement compensated the landlord, Mr. Young Walker, on his quitting the premises in accordance with a valuation to be made at that time. It also stipulated 'that they the lessees and their tenants shall and will throughout the said term, so long as the necessary licences can be obtained, keep open and use the said Inn and premises with the appurtenances as and for an Inn for the reception, accommodation and entertainment of travellers, guests and other persons resorting thereto with or without horses, cattle and carriages.'

The lease, which was for twenty-one years at an annual rent of £55.0.0, was signed on the 7th August 1907, however there appears to be no record of this having been revoked and there is no mention of the lease when the Druids' Hotel was next sold. At the time of the sale one of the cottages or dwelling houses, was occupied by Tom Barden, the son-in-law of James Bray, who was innkeeper from 1898 until 1901, the second dwelling house being occupied by Mrs G.H. Mitchell. However the large room on the second floor of the hotel which had formally been used by the Holmfirth Independent Labour Party as the Socialist's Hall was now unoccupied as was a third cottage, with the address of Back Lane. This had also been previously occupied.



Front of Covenant Surrender of Druids' Hall
to John Edward Heap and Daniel Stockwell



Part of Whittaker's lease referring to use by Holmfirth Independent Labour Party

Tom Barden is recorded in the 1901 census as being resident at the Druids' Hall, along with his wife Mary Ann and their two children, Joe and Sarah. However in the census of 1911 it was recorded that Samuel Barden, Mary Ann Barden, his wife, Joe Barden, his son, Clara Barden, his daughter and Maggie Barden, his granddaughter were now the occupants.

On Monday, the 16th March 1914 Mary Ann died suddenly. Her inquest was reported in the Daily Examiner the following day;

'SUDDEN DEATH AT HOLMFIRTH INQUEST'

'This afternoon Mr. E.H. Hill held an inquest at Holmfirth Council Office touching the death of Mrs Ann Barden (62), wife of Samuel Barden, retired weaver, Druids' Cottage, Holmfirth.

Joe Barden, son of the deceased, said his mother's health had been fairly good. On Sunday she went twice to church and did her housework. She went to bed about 10.30, and about 4.30 she called witness and asked him for some hot water, as she had pains in the stomach and across the shoulders. After giving her the water she told him to return to bed. His sister got up at 6 o'clock, and gave her mother some brandy. The deceased had got up at 5 o'clock and fomented herself. Between 9.30 and 10 o'clock on Monday morning he heard his mother calling for help. On going upstairs he found his mother gurgling at the throat. After that she never spoke. Witness fetched a neighbour just before his mother expired.'

It was determined that her death was due to the deceased having suffered the perforation of an enlarged heart. This was to be the last recorded death of a resident of the Druids' Hall, although it was not the last to occur within the building. The final death, occurred on the 19th June 1985, when, during an initiation ceremony held, in what was now, the Masonic Hall, W. Bro. Edward Brook Heap, the grandson of John Edward Heap, suffered a massive heart attack and died in front of a large number of the assembled brethren.

Under the terms of a will drawn up by Daniel Stockwell in 1890, he made his son Joseph Stockwell, who was a butcher, and John Edward Heap, a solicitor, trustees and executors and stated that on his death his assets were to be sold, and the money be invested to provide an income for his wife during her lifetime. Unfortunately she died before her husband on the 17th December 1904, giving rise to the proceeds of his estate being shared equally between his five children, Joseph Stockwell, John Henry Stockwell, Alexander Stockwell, James Arthur Stockwell and Martha Hannah Stockwell.

On the 25th April 1910 probate was granted and the two executors Joseph Stockwell and John Edward Heap applied at the Wakefield Court Baron to be admitted tenants to the property of Daniel Stockwell. This was approved subject to the continued annual payment of two pence to the Lord and Lady of the Manor for the rent of the land on which the building stood.

Early the following year, on the 9th January 1911, another of Daniel's sons, John Henry Stockwell, of Ribbleden, Holmfirth, also a butcher, along with John Edward Heap purchased the Druids' Hotel, cottages etc., for the sum of £600.00. It was owned by them for almost seven years before the ownership changed once again.



Druids' Hotel about 1900

The members of The Holme Valley Masonic Lodge No.652, had since its formation in 1855 met regularly at the Victoria Hotel, Station Rd., but had for some time experienced problems with the accommodation provided there. They had on occasions to resort to obtaining dispensations from Provincial Grand Lodge for

installation ceremonies to be held, first in 1896 at the Town Hall, Holmfirth, (in consequence of the small size of the lodge room at the Victoria Hotel), and later in 1897/8/9/1900 when they used the Old Drill Hall and the Druids' Hotel. These venues were also used in February, March and April of 1900 whilst alterations and additions were being made to their lodge room at the Victoria Hotel. The lodge room, which was rented for an annual fee of £10.0.0 was also being let to other parties and had resulted in furniture belonging to the Freemasons becoming damaged. On the 28th December 1913 W. Bro. C.H. Lancaster wrote to the hotel management complaining of this, which prompted the members of the lodge to look once again at the possibility of purchasing alternative premises for their meetings. A possible alternative venue had first been discussed thirty-five years earlier.

As a member and Past Master of The Holme Valley Lodge, John Edward Heap, the owner of the Druids' Hall, was fully aware of their need for new premises. His own business at the Druids' Hall had clearly become unprofitable, as in 1916 the licence was in danger of being revoked, and compensation was being sought by him from licencing board. The following article which appeared in the Huddersfield Examiner on the 7th March referred to objections being made to the renewal of the licence;

'THREE LICENCES REFERRED FOR COMPENSATION – FEW COPPERS A DAY RECEIVED AT SCAMMONDEN HOUSE.'

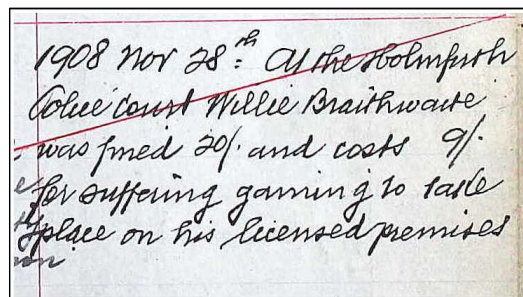
'The licence of three public-houses – the Druids' Hotel Holmfirth; the Shoulder of Mutton Inn Scammonden; and the Grove Inn, Lepton – were referred for compensation by the county justices at the annual licencing meeting held this morning. Objections had been taken to the licences at the previous Brewsters Sessions (held on the 8th February 1916) on the ground of redundancy.'

The report continued;

'SATURDAY NIGHT TRADE.'

'The Druids' Hotel, Holmfirth, was described by Inspector Foster as a fully-licenced house, situate in Station Road, Holmfirth, owned by John Henry Stockwell, Holmfirth and John Edward Heap, Honley. The building was of imposing appearance, of three storeys, but rooms were let for other purposes on each side. Very little business was done in the house, and except on Saturday nights he had never seen many customers there. On the same road, within a short distance, there were three other fully-licenced houses. Within a radius of 500 yards there were

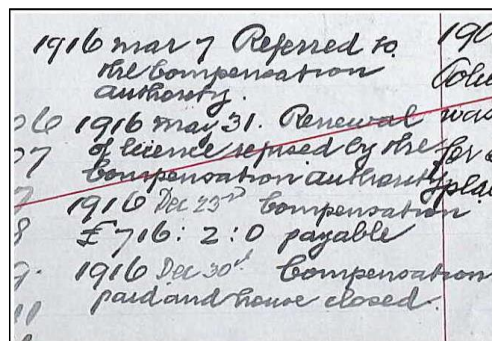
190 inhabited houses, with an estimated population of 2,205, and ten fully licenced houses, as well as a "wine off" and a "beer off" licence, giving an average of 183 persons to each licence. There was only one conviction against the house, and that was in 1908. There was only one registered club in the township of Wooldale. Sergeant Walmsley corroborated. Mr Niell (Bradford) represented the licence holder (Brook Horsfall) and the lessee and Mr.Heap appeared on behalf of the owners.'



1908 Nov 28th At the Holmfirth
Police Court Willie Braithwaite
was fined 20/- and costs 9/-
for suffering gaming to take
place on his licensed premises

Entry in licensees register showing the fine imposed on Willie Braithwaite in 1908

Having heard the application, the chairman of the board decided to refer the matter to the Compensation Authority at Wakefield, but in the meantime the licence was provisionally renewed. The Compensation Authority met again on the 31st May but on this occasion the renewal of the license was refused.



1916 mar 7	Referred to the Compensation Authority.	1916
26	1916 mar 31. Renewal was refused by the Compensation Authority.	Police
27	1916 Dec 23 rd Compensation payable	place
8	£716.2.0 payable	
7	1916 Dec 30 th Compensation paid and house closed.	
11		

On the 23rd December 1916 it was decided by the Compensation Authority that £716.2.0 compensation should be paid and one week later on the 30th December this was done and the house closed.

FROM DRUIDS' TO MASONIC HALL

The negotiations between the Freemasons, John Edward Heap and John Henry Stockwell for the purchase of the Druids' Hotel commenced in 1917, and eventually at a meeting of the lodge held on the 15th November of that year the then Master of the lodge, W. Bro. C. H. Lancaster, announced to the brethren present that his father James Lancaster a cloth finisher, Robert Turner a builder, John William Battye Shaw a cabinet maker, William Heeley a solicitor and others acting as trustees of The Holme Valley Lodge No. 652 had been successful in purchasing the Druids' Hotel complex at a cost of £700.00.

A meeting of the lodge committee was held at the Victoria Hotel the following Monday when it was proposed by W. Bro. A. Battye and seconded by W. Bro. F. Lawton that a committee of five be appointed, with the power to add to that number, to deal with the purchase of the hotel by the lodge.

The appointed committee consisted of W. Bro. J.N.W. Shaw, W. Bro. Robert Turner, W. Bro. William Heeley, W. Bro. C.H. Lancaster, Bro. F. Whiteley and Bro. John Davis. It was also proposed that W. Bro. Robert Turner and W. Bro. J.W.B. Shaw inspect the premises and purchase whatever they considered necessary for the future use and benefit of the lodge. The deeds were subsequently signed on the 21st December 1917.

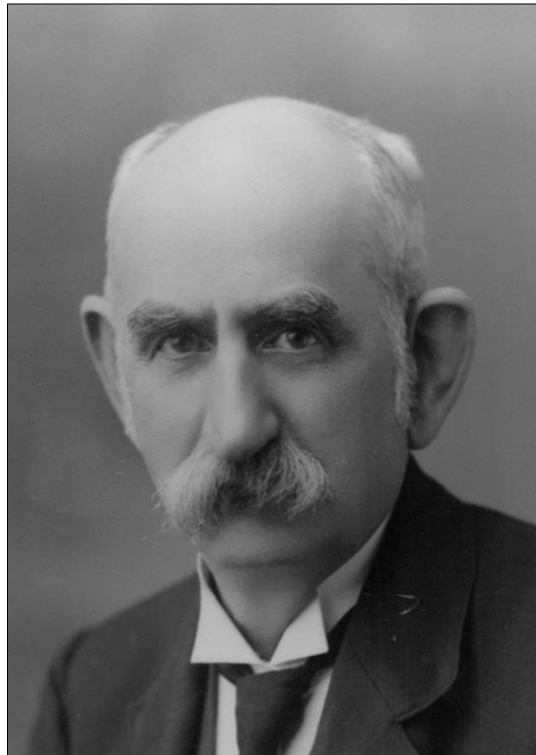
in the County of <i>York (West Riding)</i>			
Transferee, New Tenant, or Occupier.	Date of Transfer.	Forfeitures of Licenses.	Disqualifications of
<i>Joseph Littlewood</i>	<i>16.18.90</i>	<i>Christopher Abbot</i>	<i>April 28.1896</i>
<i>William Mellor</i>	<i>Mar 21. 93</i>	<i>James Bray</i>	<i>Mar 16. 1897</i>
<i>James Bray</i>	<i>Dec 18. 94</i>		
<i>David Broadhead</i>	<i>Sept 17. 95</i>		

List of Landlords between 1890 and 1897 as shown in Register of Licenses

It must be assumed that the building, which was now sixty years old, was either in a state of disrepair or required extensive alteration to accommodate its new owners. Work commenced on the refurbishment and at a meeting held on the 1st November 1919 the building committee resolved to accept a bid of fifteen shillings for old

wood, £13.0.0 for old lead and brass and a further £3.14.0 for old iron. The spouts had been examined and found to be in a very dilapidated condition and it was therefore decided to replace these at a cost of £14.10.0.

At the same meeting it was also decided to let one room to Mr. Jesse Shore of Hey Gap, Holmfirth. Mr. Shore, was a member of the 'Pride of Holme Valley, Royal Arch Chapter No. 25,' an offshoot of one of the local Druidic organisations, and a member of Wharnecliffe Masonic Lodge at Penistone where he held the office of Tyler. It was said of him that once a month he walked from Holmfirth to Penistone to lay out the lodge. He was also a member of the Holme Valley Masonic Lodge No. 652, where he had served as Tyler at the Victoria Hotel since the 14th June 1861. He continued in that post until his death on the 12th of May 1922. During this period he was paid the sum of two shillings and six pence per week for laying out the lodge, a shilling for laying and lifting the carpets and a further 3d for moving furniture, he was the only person in the lodge's history ever to receive payment for undertaking those duties.



John Edward Heap - Co-owner of the Druids' Hall in 1911

Surprisingly the mystery associated with the financing of the building by the Druids in 1852 was replicated in 1917 when the property was purchased by the Holme Valley Lodge No. 652. It was intended that an account be opened with the Midland Bank to deal with, and to hold monies borrowed for the purchase and alterations to the building. However whilst records, documents and minutes are available for this period no bank book or details of this special loan account can be found or in fact how much was borrowed. There can be no doubt however that James Lancaster, the treasurer of the lodge, opened this account as the following draft of a note was later found on a piece of Midland Bank headed notepaper and helped to shed some light on this matter.

'James Lancaster Special Account'

'In 1917 The Holme Valley Lodge of Freemasons purchased new premises at a cost of £700.00 and have since spent some £3000.00 in alterations etc.

They asked for an overdraft for the purpose of paying for the purchase but a Masonic Lodge has no power to borrow and the only way was to lend the money was to individuals.

So James Lancaster who was the Treasurer opened a loan account with us.

This was guaranteed by Jt and S (joint and several?) guarantee for £800.00, signed by C.H. Lancaster, John Davis, Fred Whiteley, F.C. Hampshire and E.L. Firth and the deeds of the property mortgaged to us.

In 1919 F.C. Hampshire died and we asked C.H. Lancaster who was the Treasurer to acquaint his co guarantors stated that a new guarantee should be signed.

In August 1920 we wrote (to) Mr C.H. Lancaster to that effect and he said he would bring it before the next lodge.

They did nothing.

In May 1921 we spoke to James Lancaster when the lodge wanted us to increase the limit from £1300.00 to £1800.00.

Told him that the guarantee for £800.00 had become void, as the guarantors had done nothing.

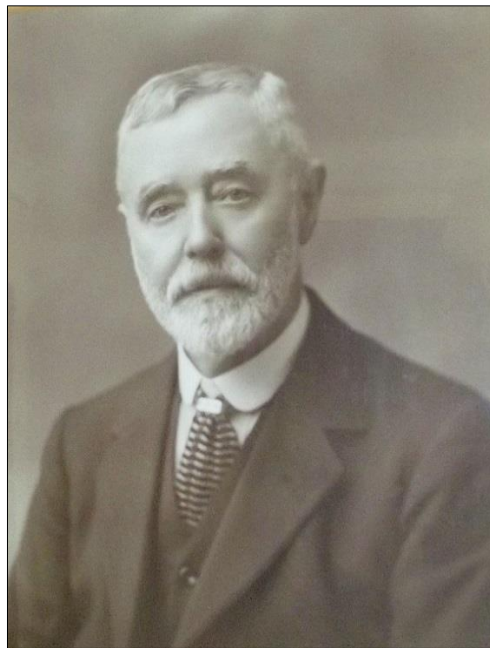
The guarantee had originally been signed to protect him and that now would be the proper time to have a new guarantee signed.

He said he did not wish to trouble the members as he thought the value of the building should cover the amount of overdraft, which should gradually decrease.

(Entry in margin Dr. £413.9.4)'

It is more than likely that the special account was opened on the 24th June 1915 as on that day an entry of a transfer of £300.0.0, made payable to Lancaster, is to be

found the Treasurer's general account book. No doubt this was the money used to open the account. As stated previously the bank account was opened to secure any money, borrowed or donated by the members of the lodge, which was to be used to pay any bills incurred in the purchase and refurbishment of the building. A further amount of £11.0.0 was recorded as having been paid to Stockwell (John Henry Stockwell) the co-owner of the Druids' Hotel on the 29th January 1918. This was probably in respect of some legal charge relating to the sale of the building.



James Lancaster who played a large part in negotiating the purchase of the Druids' Hall by the Holme Valley Lodge No.652

Yet another payment from the lodge's general account to the special account is recorded in the Treasurer's account book on December 12th 1917, when it was shown that £700.00 was paid to Heeley solicitors for the purchase of the Druids' Hotel.

Despite £1000.00 having been transferred between 1921 and 1923 from the general account into the Building Special Account, entries in the Treasurer's annual statement for 1926 show that a balance of £1103.7.1d was owed to the bank and that in 1927 this figure was still £1075.12.1d. However by 1928 this had risen to

£1225.12.1d. Donations totalling £996.10.0d were made by members of the lodge to help clear this debt, the largest coming from W. Bro. James Lancaster who gave £100.0.0d.

Since progress in renovating the building was proving to be rather slow an emergency meeting was called at the Druids' Hall on the 24th June 1920 when it was resolved to 'push on with the alterations as quickly as possible'. A further special meeting was held on 22nd July 1920, when Mr Tolson's tender for 'electric lighting and Mr Bailey's estimate for warming apparatus' were approved. By January of 1921 the work was well underway and at a meeting held on the 13th January, it was proposed and accepted, that the seats should now be upholstered. Payments made during this period for repairs carried for the renovation of the Druids' Hotel were in excess of £2000.0.0d, a tremendous amount of money when it is considered that the hotel, cottages and stable complex were purchased for only £700.0.0d four years earlier and would suggest that a considerable amount of work and labour were necessary before the building could be considered useable.

In consequence of this The Holme Valley Lodge did not move from the Victoria Hotel to its new premises until 17th March 1921, when the Master W. Bro. Walter Quarmby performed a double passing ceremony, the candidates being Brothers W. Robinson and G. W. Brinsley. A ballot followed for three new members, William Lodge, Russell Tricker and William Hardy, and having proved in their favour, William Lodge was then initiated by W. Bro. R.T. Hardy, there were thirty-three members and six visitors present that evening. In December of that year he installed Bro. G.J. Shaw as Master, when it was recorded that 20 bottles of champagne, 12 bottles of whisky, 24 sodas and 200 cigars and cigarettes were purchased for the occasion.

The lodge room at the Victoria Hotel had, since 1883, been shared by the Royal Arch Chapter of Industry, No.652 and since the Holme Valley Masonic Lodge had taken the decision to move to new premises it naturally followed that the Chapter of Industry would join them.

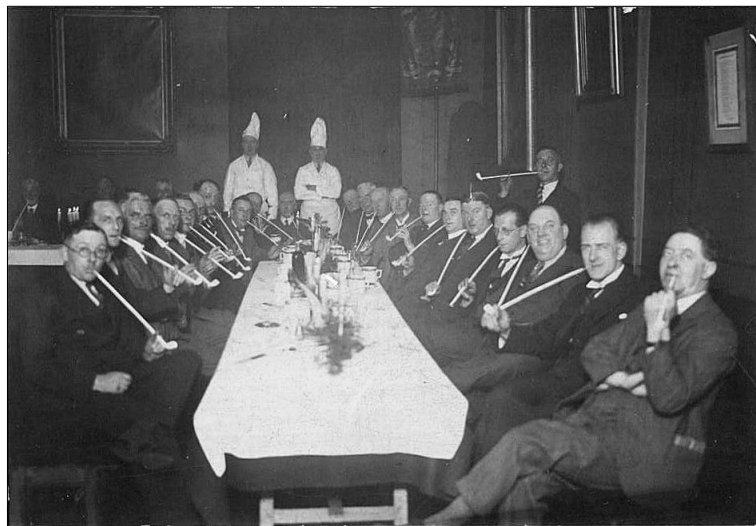
On the 9th February 1921 it was proposed by Ex. Companion T.M. Haigh and seconded by Ex. Companion J.W.B. Shaw;

'that the Chapter move automatically with the Craft to the new premises and arrangements for same be dealt with by the M.E.Z. and Scribe E.' and at a special convocation held at the Victoria Hotel on Tuesday, the 12th April a proposition was made by Ex. Companion Lister Sykes, *'that the sum of £50.0.0 be given by this Chapter to the building fund of the new Craft Lodge premises.'*

The following day, the 13th April 1921, the first regular convocation of the Chapter of Industry was held at the new Masonic Hall when twenty-three members and visitors were present.

The tenancy agreement between the Holme Valley Lodge and the Victoria Hotel continued until the 3rd of February 1922 when it was finally agreed it should be terminated, this however was subject to the lodge paying the hotel the full annual rent of £25.0.0 to December 1921.

The land on which the Holme Valley Masonic Hall now stood continued to be leased from the Earl of Yarborough, however on the 18th March 1932, pursuant to the properties act of 1922, Robert Turner, John William Battye Shaw and the other trustees purchased the freehold on behalf of The Holme Valley Lodge for the sum of £33.13.10p.



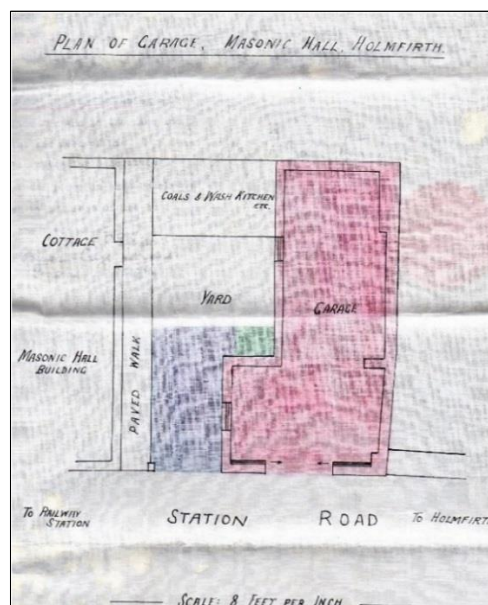
*Old English Night Festivities held at the Druids' Hall in 1931
to celebrate the 80th birthday of W. Bro. James Lancaster*

Adjacent to the Masonic Hall was the stable and carriage house which had by now been converted into a motor garage. It had been previously rented in 1890 to Fred Brook who operated from there as a carriage and waggonette proprietor. It was later let to Rapha Thomas Hardy, a coal and lime agent, and later still in May of 1932 was leased to His Majesty's Post Master General as a garage for the storage of their vehicles at an annual rent of £20.0.0, however by the end of their lease in 1960 this had increased to £40.0.0 per annum. The stable and carriage house continued to be let as a garage until February of 1968, when it was agreed that the building should be leased to Mr. F. Turner at a rent of £52.0.0 per annum plus rates.

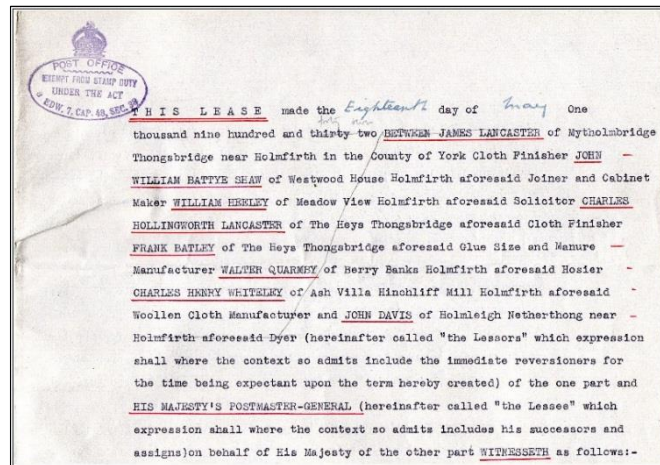
However at some point during the following month he appears to have been outbid by Mr. J. Littlewood, who agreed to pay £60.0.0 per year plus rates and to whom the garage was subsequently let.

By 1985 the income generated from this rental was beginning to prove inadequate, and as a consequence it was decided that the garage be valued with a view to its sale. The valuation, with vacant possession, was estimated to be £1500.00 or for rental purposes £2.50 per week. The Brethren however felt that this amount was inadequate and it was therefore decided to terminate the tenancy and re-advertise it to let, but with a three year rent review. The garage became empty in July of the following year and as it was still unoccupied in November it was decided to make application to the council for a change of its use to a retail outlet. Permission however was refused.

The upkeep of the building was continuing to prove expensive and so in consequence of this it was proposed in 1987 that the garage be advertised to be let once more, but on this occasion on more realistic commercial terms. The Brethren accepted this proposal and on the 1st May 1987 it was leased, at a rent of £1040.00 per annum to Mr. N. Roberts who remained the tenant until 1992 when it was demolished to make way for a small car park.



Plan of garage/coach house and wash kitchen adjacent to the Masonic Hall drawn in 1932 and prior to its demolition in 1993



Section of lease between the Post Office and the Masonic Lodge in 1932

General refurbishments continued to take place within the building and in about 1950 a new floor was laid in the temple, (this had originally been the Druids' Hall), and it was said by all the members 'to be a significant improvement.'

Despite income being generated from the letting of the stable and carriage house, by January 1989 the Brethren considered it necessary to examine the possibility of developing the building in such a way as to produce further regular income.

A committee was formed to consider this proposal and consisted of W. Bro. James T. Broadbent (chairman), W. Bro. Neil H. Beaumont, Bro. Michael Hellawell, Bro. Barry Vincent and Bro. George Hardy. George Hardy unfortunately died later that year and his place was taken by Bro. Reginald S. Senior.

At a special lodge management committee meeting held on the 23rd March of the same year the proposals were discussed, after which the committee duly authorised Bro. Michael Hellawell, an architect, to prepare plans to modify the building. By November these plans had been formulated and were presented again to the committee for their approval, which was granted.

The scheme was duly submitted to Kirklees Metropolitan Council by Bro. Hellawell and was approved on the 20th June 1990. The aim was to convert the wings of the building on the ground floor into two offices which could then be let at a realistic commercial rent and provide that valuable additional income which

was becoming increasingly necessary for the upkeep of the lodge. It was also proposed to remove a wall on the first floor, between the supper room and what was the upper part of one of the original cottages, to form a new bar area, Past Master's room and toilet.

Now that the plans had been approved the full scheme was put before the Lodge management committee with some indication of cost.

It was decided however before proceeding with the work that the scheme should be placed before a full meeting of all the Brethren of The Holme Valley Lodge on the 6th December 1990 to seek their approval.

A resolution was passed at this meeting to proceed with the alterations, but to delay their start for four weeks, this it was felt would allow sufficient time for any Brother to come forward with alternative proposals. Since no changes to the plans were forthcoming, work commenced with a feeling of great enthusiasm and considerable financial help from the brethren. This proved to be one of the wisest decisions made by the members of The Holme Valley Lodge as it provided that extra income required to give the lodge it's much needed long term financial stability.

It is interesting to note that during the alterations of 1991, whilst removing flag stones in what had been the living room of one of the cottages, and which is now the boiler room and cellar, a very large flag of about seven feet square and six inches thick was found immediately in front of the fire place, with its near edge forming part of the fireplace hearth. When struck it gave a very distinct hollow sound. It was decided to lift this but before doing so it was noticed that there was a small hole at the edge of the stone of about one inch in diameter. One of the Brethren pushed a small piece of masonry through the hole and was amazed to hear a small splash some seconds later. It was agreed therefore before taking any further action to make a rough plumb line which was lowered through the hole, when to the surprise of everyone present, a well, some thirty three feet deep, seven feet wide and containing water to a depth of several feet was discovered. After much deliberation it was decided that the best course of action was to have this expertly capped, and it remains so to the present day. More recently in 2002 new windows were fitted throughout the whole building at a cost of over £18,000.00 and in 2006, further alterations took place under the guidance of the Master, W. Bro. Ronald Hunter when the entrance hall, staircase, supper room and bar areas were refurbished.

Much of the refurbishment could not have been carried out without the invaluable work and support given by the members of the social committee and their ladies, who by their effort and hard work over several years in organizing fund raising events, had provided that extra financial help which enabled the Lodge to put into place some of the luxuries it now enjoyed.

From the day of its opening on Whit-Monday, the 31st of May 1852 to its purchase by the Holme Valley Masonic Lodge in 1917 the Druids' Hall was the home to numerous landlords and their families. Some were resident for several years whilst others lived there for a relatively short period. This is recorded in the register of licensees. Michael Redfearn and his family resided there for almost thirteen years and Hugh Holmes was tenant for ten whilst Ann Woodhead, who continued as landlady after the death of her husband Benjamin in 1862 until she died in 1869 at the age of seventy-four, lived at the Druids' Hotel for almost eleven years.

LANDLORDS AT DRUIDS' HALL 1853 - 1917

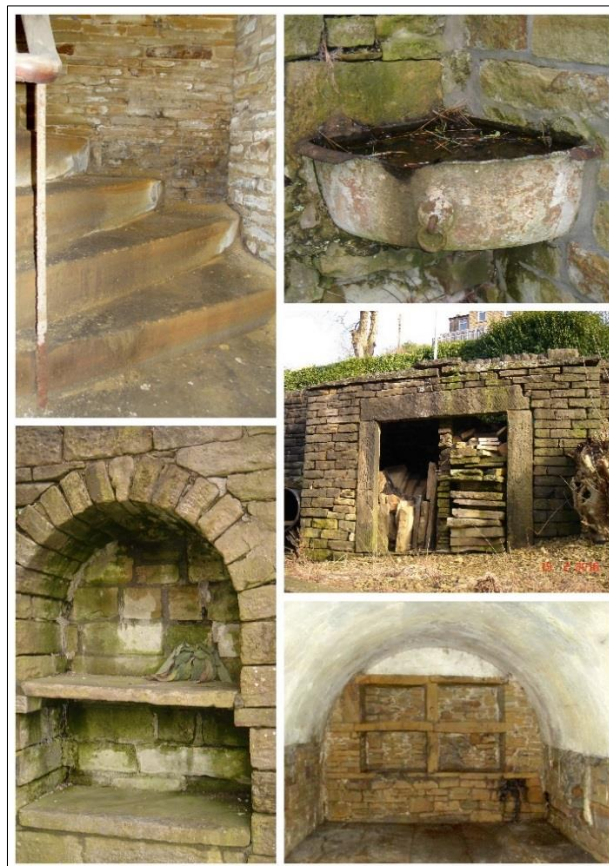
1853	Abraham Haley	1886	Michael Redfearn
1854	Abraham Haley	1887	Michael Redfearn
1855	Abraham Haley	1888	Michael Redfearn
1856	John Hirst	1889	Michael Redfearn
1857	John Hirst	1890	Michael Redfearn/Joe Littlewood
1858	John Hirst	1891	Joe Littlewood
1859	John Hirst	1892	Joe Littlewood
1860	Benjamin Woodhead	1893	Joe Wood/Hiram Mellor
1861	Benjamin Woodhead	1894	Hiram Mellor/James Bray
1862	Benjamin Woodhead/ Ann Woodhead	1895	James Bray/David Broadhead
1863	Ann Woodhead	1896	David Broadhead/Christopher Abbott
1864	Ann Woodhead	1897	Christopher Abbott/James Bray
1865	Ann Woodhead	1898	James Bray
1866	Ann Woodhead	1899	James Bray
1867	Ann Woodhead	1900	James Bray
1868	Ann Woodhead	1901	James Bray
1869	Ann Woodhead/Hugh Holmes	1902	James Bray/Thomas Barden
1870	Hugh Holmes	1903	Thomas Barden
1871	Hugh Holmes	1904	Thomas Barden
1872	Hugh Holmes	1905	Thomas Barden
1873	Hugh Holmes	1906	Thomas Barden/Albert Stockwell Heap
1874	Hugh Holmes	1907	Albert Stockwell Heap/Young Walker/John Leeman
1875	Hugh Holmes	1908	John Leeman/Willie Braithwaite
1876	Hugh Holmes	1909	Willie Braithwaite/Lavinia Owen
1877	Hugh Holmes	1910	Lavinia Owen
1878	Hugh Holmes/Michael Redfearn	1911	Lavinia Owen/George Henry Hirst/ Brooke Horsfall
1879	Michael Redfearn	1912	Brooke Horsfall
1880	Michael Redfearn	1913	Brooke Horsfall
1881	Michael Redfearn	1914	Brooke Horsfall
1882	Michael Redfearn	1915	Brooke Horsfall
1883	Michael Redfearn	1916	Brooke Horsfall
1884	Michael Redfearn		
1885	Michael Redfearn		

From 1891 until its closure in 1916 the Druids' Hotel was recorded as being poorly patronised and this is no doubt reflected in the increased number of landlords who were recorded in the Register of Licensees as being resident at the Druids' Hotel

during this period. This high turnover is particularly noticeable following the purchase of the building by John Edward Heap and John Henry Stockwell in 1906.

[illegible]

Entry in Register of Licenses showing landlords from 1902 until 1916



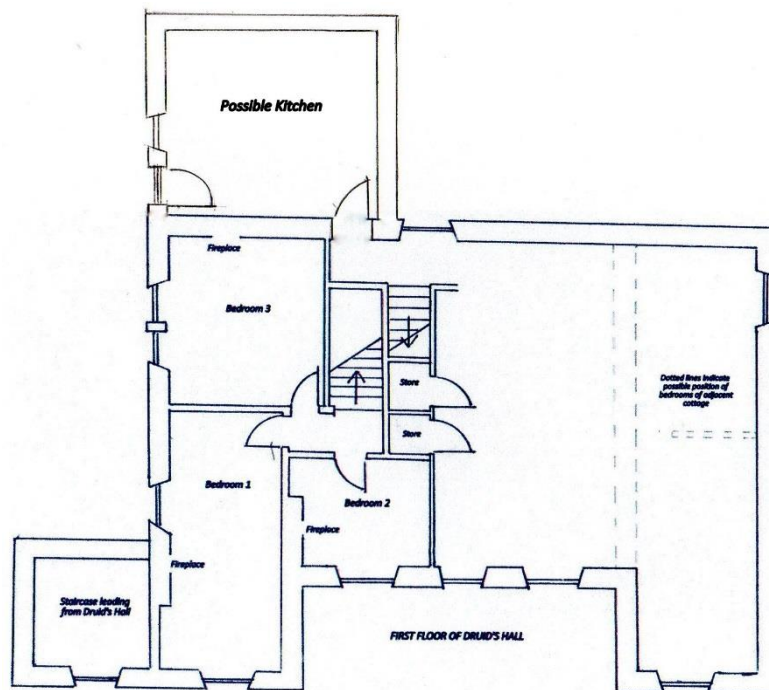
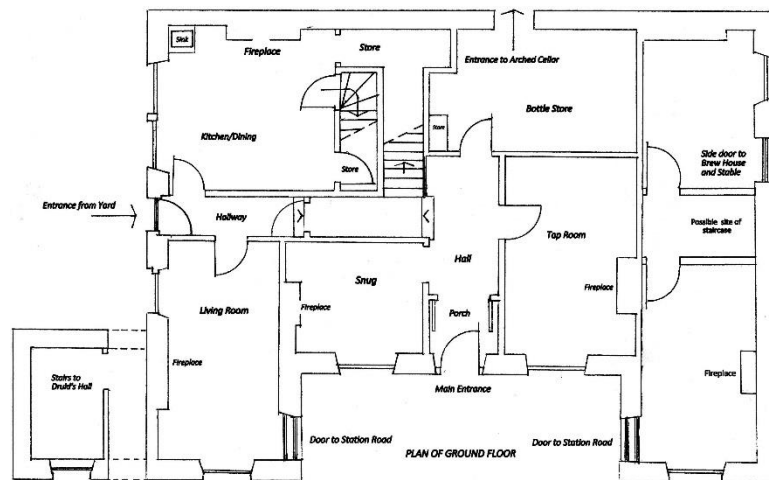
Entrance and remains of the stone spiral staircase leading to the Druids' Hall, horse trough in corner of the original stable, outside toilets, remains of brew-house shelves and arched cellar built into the hill behind the Druids' Hotel.

In the period following the building of the Druids' Hall in 1852 and the present day several alterations have been made to the building, particularly internally. The entrance to the hotel, which occupied the central part of the building on two floors, was via a door in the middle of the building and this has remained unchanged. However between 1917 and 1921 a covered staircase linking the first and second floors was built at the rear of the building, prior to this the only entrance to the Druids' Hall on the top floor was by a winding stone staircase situated outside the building. This in turn necessitated blocking windows at the rear of the Druids' Hall, reducing light into the hall itself.



Photograph of Druids' Hall taken prior to alterations made in 1917 and before staircase at the rear of building was added

On entering the hotel the best room, or snug, was situated to the left of a small hallway and the tap, or common room, was to the right, both of which are now part of the lettable offices. The first floor which housed three bedrooms, a music room and a storeroom was reached by a staircase leading from just behind the snug and this still remains the main route to the first floor, whilst a short corridor at the foot of the stairs led from the public house to the landlord's accommodation. The brew house, stable and carriage house were located on the lower side of the building and were removed in 1993 to accommodate the present car park. The landlord's



Plans of Druids' Hall prior to alterations made in 1917 by the Freemasons

Conditions were no doubt cramped as the 1881 census shows the house as being occupied by Michael Redfearn, licensed victualler, his wife Emma, two sons James and William, a daughter Susanna, a lodger Richard Bottomley and a general servant Elizabeth Fargon. This however was not unusual at that time.

The three bedrooms on the first floor were removed in 1991 when further alterations to the building were carried out and now form part of the bar and Past Master's room.

The second cottage, number 28, Station Road, was situated in the right wing of the building with its entrance also via the flagged area in front of the hotel. It too had a second door which opened into what is now the car park.

Since the census of 1911 shows Willie Armitage, his wife Sarah Elizabeth, his son Cecil and his mother in law Harriet Mitchell living there in what was recorded as a four roomed house it is more than likely that there were two bedrooms on the first floor which extended over the right wing. It is thought that the wall which separated these bedrooms from the hotel extended to a large beam in the ceiling of the present supper room and that it was removed between 1917 and 1921.

A third, two roomed cottage facing onto Back Lane, was situated on the top floor at the rear south east corner of the building, with its access from Back Lane.

The entrance to the Druids' Hall on the second floor was by a winding stone spiral staircase which led directly from a narrow passage at the left of the building into the Druids' Hall, which was situated on the second floor. Its purpose was to separate the hall from the public house which occupied the ground and first floor. The staircase, which was partially removed during the alterations of 1991, passed through what is now the ladies toilet on the first floor, and exited into a small room in the left wing on the second. Remains of this can still be seen in a small cellar situated to the left of the building.

W. Bro. James T. Broadbent, a Past Master of The Holme Valley Masonic Lodge, recalled his mother-in-law Mary Elizabeth Goldthorpe, of Broth Row, Magnum and her friend Mrs Lena Hirst, of Mount Farm, Greave, telling him of the many dances they had attended at the Druids' Hall and of climbing the stone staircase to reach the main hall on the second floor.

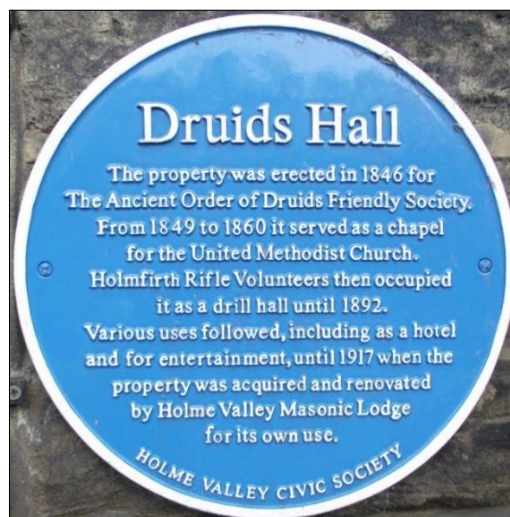
The cloakroom she recalled was a small room on the top floor and the toilets, which were of the midden type, were in the yard at the rear, where their remains can still be seen to this day.

The final major alteration to be undertaken following the purchase of the building by the Freemasons was to construct a wall to form a corridor linking the new staircase and the Druids' Hall on the second floor.



The wall on the left was added in 1917 and reduced the size of the Druids' Hall by about 2½ metres. It formed a corridor linking the Hall to the new staircase. The doorway leading from this staircase was originally part of the outside wall and beyond that was a gentleman's toilet which has also been demolished

The Druids' Hall, which stands on an elevated incline in Station Rd., can only be described as a fine, substantial, Regency fronted building and must be the most accommodating building in the Holme Valley, having played its part in much of Holmfirth's history. Being first built by, and for, the United Ancient Order of the Druids Lodge No. 150, it has been used by the United Methodists following their breakaway from the Holmfirth Wesleyans in 1857 and was utilized by them on Sundays for their services until 1860 when their own chapel, which stood on the site of the Holmfirth market in Huddersfield Rd., was completed. The Holmfirth Rifle Volunteer Corps, also known as the 32nd West Yorkshire, which was formed in 1860, held their drill sessions at the Druids' Hall from 1873 until 1892 when the Drill Hall, now part of the Civic Hall, was opened. It has served as a meeting place for the Holmfirth Independent Labour Party, the temperance movement and was the venue for numerous social and political functions, dances and various forms of entertainment and more recently the site of the Holmfirth art festival.



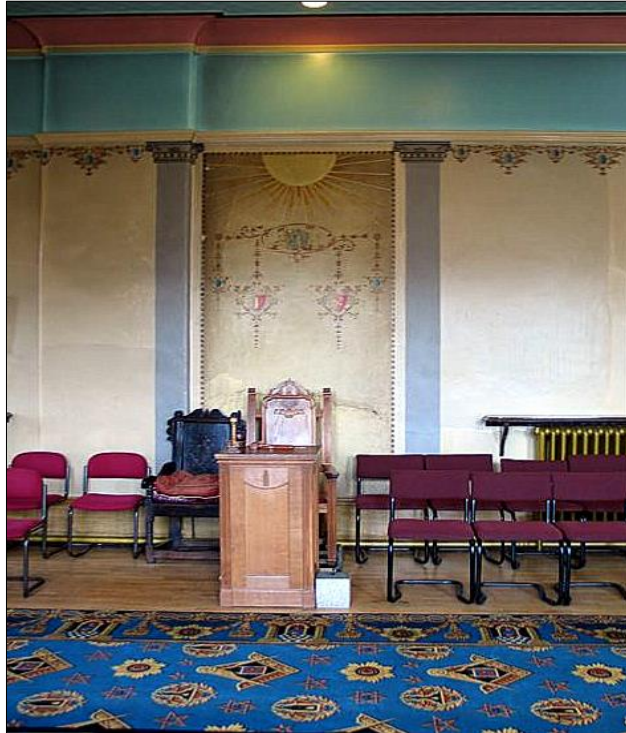
Holme Valley Civic Society Plaque presented in 2013.

The Druids' Hall, now known as the Masonic Hall was first the home of the Briton's Pride Lodge No.150 and has been occupied by The Holme Valley Lodge No. 652 since 1921 and is used regularly for their ceremonies and social events. To many local residents it still retains that air of secrecy and mystery which has surrounded it since it was first erected over one hundred and sixty years ago by The Ancient Order of the Druids, and no doubt it will continue to play its part in the history of the town for many years to come.

THE REBUILDING OF THE MASONIC TEMPLE

The Druids' Hall, when purchased in nineteen hundred and seventeen, was in need of repair and modification to accommodate the needs of the Freemasons. In fact following its purchase it was four years before the building was fit to be used for regular Masonic meetings. The large room on the second floor, previously the Druids' Hall, was to be used as the Masonic Temple. When first built, the upper hall consisted of one large room and two small anti-rooms, with its entrance via a winding stone staircase. However, a second flight of stairs leading from the first to the second floor was added along with a wall to form a corridor leading from the top of the stairs to the Temple.

Whilst a considerable amount of money was spent modifying the building between 1917 and 1921 repairs to it in subsequent years appear to have been minimal and this, together with a regular lack of funds, contributed to the general wear and tear in the room. However in 1957, as the lodge's centenary celebrations were approaching, the condition of the building became the cause of some concern once again. It was decided therefore that a sum of £700.00 be transferred, as a loan, from the lodge's general account to the Centenary Fund to enable the Treasurer to meet the costs likely to be incurred in renovating and decorating the Temple prior to the celebrations. The cost of redecorating was £282.0.0 (plus extra for gold leaf) and at the suggestion of Bro. Frank Platt fifteen lights were fitted in the ceiling. This amount, plus the additional cost of generally renovations, put a great deal of strain on the finances of the lodge, which were now in a critical state. Such was the financial position that the then Treasurer, Herbert H. Hirst, appealed to the Brethren to assist by all means possible, and in view of the amount already spent refurbishing the building it was suggested, in November 1958, that in future Bro. Eric Wood, a master painter, should be paid £5.0.0 per year to maintain the lodge room decorations in good order. However during the subsequent fifty years little attention appears to have been paid to either the condition of the structure or decoration within the Temple. Nevertheless in the period between 1980 and 1990 the room was partially re-decorated by Bro. John Schofield, the son of W. Bro. Jack Schofield, an eminent freemason and Past Master of the lodge, and in the early part of the twenty first century it was decorated once again by Bro. Ronnie Hunter, both members retaining the ornate wall features first used in 1957. Regrettably despite time and money having been spent repainting the room, by 2011 the general condition of the hall was again giving rise to some concern. The plaster which had been applied in 1917 was now beginning to crack and had become so loose in places that it was in danger of falling off the wall. The paint work within the room had become dirty and the curtains were in urgent need of replacement, giving an overall impression of decline and decay.



*The Holme Valley Lodge
Temple
Prior to Alterations*





Ornate wall and ceiling decorations painted in 1957 for centenary celebrations

During the early part of the twenty-first century a debate had taken place concerning the possibility of re-furbishing the Temple but regrettably little progress was made. It was only following the death, on the 24 July 2011, of W. Bro. Edgar Dickinson, one of the lodge's most respected Past Masters that the matter was once again raised and the prospect of the work commencing became a reality.

On his death, Edgar Dickinson, who had for many years been one of the lodge's main benefactors, left a legacy of £10,000 to be used as the members felt fit.

Much discussion took place and several suggestions were put forward in respect of its most appropriate use.

It was finally decided that the legacy should be used to augment money already held in the lodge's general fund to completely refurbish the Temple, as it was felt that this was a project which would have met with his approval. A budget of £20,000.00 was agreed and the project was placed in the hands of the Clerk of Works, W. Bro. Ronnie Hunter, who proceeded to obtain estimates for the prospective work. Several proposals were presented by him to the Lodge Management Committee, but before the final plans and estimates could be submitted W. Bro. Hunter advised the committee that his recent move from Holmfirth to Flamborough was preventing him from having regular meetings with the contractors and that reluctantly he would be unable to continue to oversee the work. After further discussion it was decided to ask W. Bro. Peter Berry, who had played a large part in organising the alterations to the supper room in 2006, to undertake the supervision of the project.

Having accepted the task he requested that the Brethren submit any proposals to the committee in respect of features they would like incorporating in the final design of the room. As a consequence of this it was suggested that coving, incorporating up-lighting, be fitted at the level of the picture rail and that plaster columns be placed behind the Master's and Warden's chairs, all further alteration were to be left in the hands of W. Bro. Berry.

Brent Baylis of Plasterline, an expert in ornamental plastering, was contacted and an estimate for the full refurbishment of the Temple obtained. He had previously carried out the alterations in the supper room in 2006, and it was felt that his work was of a particularly high standard. This was presented to the Lodge Management Committee and was duly approved.

The work began on Friday, the 20th September 2013 and it was hoped that it would be completed by the 17th November, the date of the next lodge meeting. However problems quickly arose. As the plaster was removed from the walls it became evident that it was of varying thickness, in some places it was as little as one inch thick whilst in others it was between four and five inches and the walls were neither straight nor were they perpendicular.



Work in Progress



The New Masonic Temple



New Temple Ceiling, Display Cabinet and Lodge Banner

These complications proved to be relatively minor and were quickly dealt with by the contractors. However having resolved one problem another arose in the form of the ceiling. Since the existing ceiling was of an old lathe and plaster design it had been decided, in order to reduce the amount of dust likely to be produced, to overboard the existing one. This however was to prove more difficult than had been originally anticipated as the joists supporting the ceiling were not located in their expected positions and in order to accurately position the lathes needed to support the new ceiling it became necessary to pierce through the ceiling from the attic above adjacent to each individual joist, a somewhat time consuming operation. Having dealt with all these problems the work was now running behind time and consequently the contractors found it necessary to work late into the evening in order to keep the project on schedule.

As the alterations were nearing completion all that remained before final plastering was to refit the four doors leading into the Temple. It had become clear earlier in the refurbishment of the room that these had been fitted at different periods during the buildings history, as each was of a different shape and size. New door frames were fitted of matching size and the work was almost complete.

It was interesting to note that when the plaster was removed from the back wall of the hall two chimneys were found with openings for fireplaces which were presumably used to provide heating in the room when the building was first erected. There was also evidence of two blocked windows.

Despite the many problems encountered the alterations were completed almost on time and the room was ready for decorating and the final touches adding.

The refurbishment had, by its very nature, made it necessary for both the Royal Arch Chapter's Installation and the Holme Valley Lodge's November Scroll night to be held in the supper room on the floor below. This was quite unique in the history of both the Lodge and the Chapter, but was nevertheless enjoyed by all present.

Finally on the 19th December 2013, after a year when so much had been achieved, W. Bro. John Michael Coupland, with a great deal of pride, placed W. Bro. Allen Melville France in the chair of King Solomon in a Temple which could now be said to be one of the finest in the district.

The Druids' Hall has been witness to many varied ceremonies and has been the venue for numerous religious, secular and military events and its landlords have played host to the many members of the various societies which have used the hall for their meetings. As a building it has played a prominent part in the history of Holmfirth and its importance cannot be ignored and it is hoped that it will continue to remain a dominant feature of the town for many years to come.

