



Stow Parish Archive

Newsletter

April 2008

The members of the Archive team would like to thank everyone who attended our Saturday session on Stow shops and businesses on March 15th. We estimate that there were over 100 visitors throughout the morning which is a marvellous turn out! We now have collected more information, stories and material. With your help the archive continues to grow.

The word we live in today seems to be unnecessarily obsessed with Health and Safety issues. In the past however, as you are about to read, accidents were extremely common. The locality was indeed a very dangerous place to live and work!

Mill Accident 1886

A piecer named James Hoggarth was nearly strangled in Mr Mercer's Mill when the collar of his coat got drawn into the wheels of a spinning mule. He was unconscious when extracted but recovered somewhat bruised.

Accident July 1886

On Wednesday morning while engaged in repairing the walls of the house adjoining Torsonce Mill (recently burnt down) the top portion of the gable gave way and bricks fell on one of the workmen named James Hogg, a mason belonging to the village. He sustained a broken leg below the knee.

On the previous afternoon a surfaceman named George Fairgrieve residing in Killochyett while working on the new railway bridge a little north of Fountainhall Station had one of his legs severely crushed when railway sleepers fell from a bogey.

A narrow escape

William Ritchie, slater, had a narrow escape when cleaning out the rones at Torsonce House. His ladder slipped and he fell 24 feet to the ground. He was lucky as his head just missed striking the wall and on landing just missed iron railings by a few inches.

Ice - January 1887

As a consequence of ice which covered the road, the Lauder Bus had a narrow escape from a capsize when coming to Stow. At a very steep part of the hill the horse, although being driven very cautiously by "old John", slipped and fell and the machine which was laden with passengers, swung completely round on the face of the brae. Luckily, it kept its wheels and thus avoided what could have been a serious accident.

John Burrell, a railway surfaceman, was going to his work yesterday when he slipped on ice and broke his leg. For some weeks now the roads in Stow have been extremely dangerous.

Farm Boys

James Purves, a farm servant at Muirhouse, had his leg broken while sledging in a field on the farm. The sledge on which he and others were seated ran over a stone and its occupants all landed in the burn at the bottom of the field.

A lad named Brown (aged 15) was injured at Watherston Farm. He was in charge of a horse and cart which had another horse attached to the back by rope. When turning into a field the led horse began to pull backwards with such force as to capsize the cart and put the other horse on its side. The boy was pitched out and sustained severe injuries about the body.

1896 Factory Accident

Maggie Munro, a young lass, while working on a winding machine at Mr Macnee's factory had two fingers of her left hand badly crushed and they had to be amputated.

Please come along on Wednesday 30th April from 7.30 onwards and help us add to the Archive anything of interest. We can copy any photos or documents or we can simply make notes on any memories that you have that would be of interest.