

## *Grindleford* Horticultural Society

### **The Grindleford Horticultural show - August 2021**

Despite the forecast the bad weather did not materialise and the village turned out in force to support the 70th Horticultural Show on August 21st, with people of all ages enjoying themselves. It was good to see so many people after months of isolation and the exhibits were splendid. The staging of exhibits across the pavilion and marquee worked well and the steps taken to ensure a safe environment were well received.





One exhibit deserves a special mention- a memorial to Chris West, a resident of Grindleford and a great supporter of the society who will be greatly missed

These shows do not happen without a great deal of planning and resources to deliver it, so GHS is very grateful to all those who pitched in! So thank you helpers & to those who provided equipment, marquees, gazebos, our exhibitors and stall holders you all delivered a great show.

## **Grindleford Horticultural Society talks are Back**

A long, long, long time ago Grindleford Horticultural Society used to have regular talks in the Bishop Pavilion. We hope you will be glad to read that talks are resuming.

Our first talk on Tuesday 19th October at the Bishop Pavilion is:  
Clifford Cain of Fruitscape with "Fruit Growing in the North of England"

Growing fruit is at the heart of Fruitscape providing expert services with regards to the pruning, care and maintenance of tree and soft fruit as well as the supply of plants. Conversations with some would lead you to conclude that it isn't possible to grow fruit in the North. This talk debunks that myth and looks at the vast array of soft and top (Fruit that grows on trees) fruit that can be successfully grown in the North. So if you have had a question about a particular fruit or need advice on correct pruning, this is an opportunity to get those questions answered.

**Tuesday October 19th at Bishop Pavilion 7.30 PM,**

Want to come, not a member of the Horticultural Society, come anyway, our first meeting will be open to all in Grindleford, we will be taking regard to the covid situation and seating will be suitably spaced, sanitiser available and the room well ventilated.

**PROGRAMME FOR AUTUMN/WINTER 2021/22**

Tuesday October 19th 2021: Fruit Growing in the North of England.  
Clifford Cain, Fruitscape.

Tuesday November 16th 2021: AGM and Quiz. A fun and sociable evening

Tuesday January 18th 2022: New to Gardening? Things to consider about different conditions.

Carl Leaman, Millthorpe Nurseries

Tuesday February 15th 2022: The Return of Otters to the Peak District.  
Drs Deborah Dawson & Douglas Ross. University of Sheffield.

# Tribute to Chris West

Chris West, who died in August was a good friend to Grindleford Horticultural Society for many years. The greenhouse and gardening company Two Wests & Elliott was founded over 45 years ago by Chris & his late wife Josephine West, together with their 'sleeping' partner Elliott (their canine companion). The company continues to be based in Chesterfield, their first catalogue was published back in 1975 and mail order became an important aspect of their business, moving into on-line sales in 2001. Chris was an inventor and his creativity found its way into many products.

Chris and Jo were very talented gardeners and his dahlias, in particular, were a joy to behold, winning prizes at many prestigious shows. He ensured they would be exhibited at our own show and his family were thrilled by Sarah Rockliff's display of his dahlias at our show. His sister Prue in Auckland, New Zealand was delighted to see photos from our show the same day. Chris also inspired his palliative care nurse to develop her gardening skills, sharing his knowledge to the end.

Chris was a quiet, modest gentleman who arranged the engraving of our trophies annually and Two Wests and Elliott sponsored the 'Best Horticultural Exhibit' & Best Grindleford Exhibit.

The photo shows Chris being presented with the Royal Banksian Medal in August 2018, awarded to the winner of the highest number of points in the Horticultural classes of the show. He had claimed this honour regularly.



Kay Allinson

# THANK YOU, CAROL!

In the last edition of Grindleford News, readers may have seen the reference to Carol Galbraith who has retired from organising the Lunch Club ‘after more years of service than anyone dares to count’. With this in mind, the Editors thought it would be good to give readers an account of just how much Carol has contributed to the village.

Carol moved to Grindleford with her husband Frank and three children Sean, Vanessa and Duncan in 1982. Perhaps preparation for the many afternoon teas and lunches she produced over the years started in the Grindleford School kitchens where she worked for a time.

In her 40’s, Carol was invited to attend a Women’s Institute meeting. Her first thought was: ‘I’m not old enough for this!’ But she must have enjoyed it as she remained a member until Grindleford WI closed 3 years ago – some 40 years later.

It didn’t take long for her to become a committee member where she served as Treasurer and President. Many villagers will remember Carol as a leading member of the WI team which organised, and produced, wonderful cream teas for the Carnival and Horticultural Show. She was also a key cook for the Playing Fields Association’s Burns’ Night Supper. Those of us who have lived in the village since the 1990s may still have the lovely informative booklet ‘Grindleford Past and Present’ which was produced by the WI and with which Carol was also involved.

When one of the WI committee, Jill Bradley, suggesting the idea of setting up a lunch club, Carol was involved from the outset and in latter years was its mainstay.

After the village WI branch closed, again, Carol was the instigator of the Cuppa Club as a way for the ex-members to continue to meet.

According to a friend, who knows Carol very well, she always ‘kept her ear open to the needs of the village’; undertaking many private kindnesses such as visiting folk who were sick or taking them to doctor’s or hospital appointments.

Grindleford News, on behalf of the village, want to say a big **THANK YOU** for everything you have done for the village and its residents.

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**Grindleford News plans to produce further articles about the many people who have worked tirelessly for village activities and associations. If you know someone who you think should have a ‘shout out’, contact The News through the usual channels.**



# The Grindelford Community Shop

## Welcome to our new manager

In August we welcomed our new manager, Peter Ragdale. Many in the village will know him and he brings his experience from the café at Caudwell's Mill in Rowsley to the job. Andrew Batty retired as manager in April after his sterling work in keeping the shop open throughout the Covid lockdowns, for which he deserves enormous thanks. We also thank Sadie Howarth who replaced him in April but has now found a job at Tesco, which is better for her childcare arrangements. At the beginning of September Sarah Batterbee also retired as manager. Sarah has been one of the driving forces behind the shop from the very beginning and has continued to support it with her customary enthusiasm. She also spent the last year securing funding for future improvements to the church and the shop. On top of this she also helped organise this year's Goat cycling event. The former managers will continue to help in the shop as volunteers.



Peter will be the overall manager, but will be working part-time, so we are also looking to recruit a part-time assistant manager to cover for Peter on days off and when he is away. If you are interested in this role or know someone who might be, please let Peter or one of the committee members know. Alternatively drop us a line via the contact form on the website ([grindlefordshop.co.uk](http://grindlefordshop.co.uk)). We can be flexible about pay and hours.

As well as an assistant manager, we are also looking for more volunteers. The number has reduced as a result of Covid, making it harder to cover all the hours, particularly at weekends. If you would like to volunteer or have previously volunteered and would like to return, please let us know. Volunteering can be as little as a couple of hours every week or two or a regular shift at the shop. Our volunteers enjoy the social aspect of the job meeting others from the village and visitors. It can be very rewarding. In addition to serving behind the counter we need help with other activities, baking cakes, maintenance etc. At busy times we need at least two in the shop so new volunteers could start by assisting an experienced volunteer.

Finally, the good news is that, despite the Covid restrictions over the last year, for the accounting year that ran from September 2020 to August 2021 the shop was able to pay its way. There was a small operating loss for the period but if one off expenditures, such as the cost of the new till system, are taken into account, there was a small surplus. The new till, as well as being simpler, will also reduce the cost of card transactions and should pay for itself in just over a year.

Provided we can continue to get the volunteer support, Peter will be working to improve the shop and we also hope to be able to report in future editions of the Grindleford News on progress with the developments that Sarah has been working on.

# Apple Day Event

## at Grindleford Community Shop

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October  
12 midday-3pm

As a celebration of locally grown food and drink, an apple crusher and press will be outside the shop for you to turn your apples into delicious fresh juice. Bring along washed apples with bad bits removed - no need to cut them down or remove the cores. Remember to bring plenty of clean empty bottles to take away the juice!

Or just come and see how simply juice can be made from the most unpromising looking apples.

We will be hosting 'The Great Grindleford Apple Bake-Off'. Bring an apple containing bake (or dish of any kind) that people can sample, and vote for their favourite. Your chance to win a mystery prize!

We are pleased to say the Sunshine Pizza Company will be joining us in the churchyard .....so that's Saturday lunch sorted too! Come and try their apple crumble pizza!

## Grindleford Art Group

A new non tutored art group starting soon.

Bring along your own art projects and meet like minded people to give each other encouragement, help and ideas.

Grindleford Pavilion.

Thursdays 9.30 to 12 noon.

Small charge to cover the cost of room hire.

Only pay for the sessions you attend.

Interested?

Contact Veronica 01433 630740

# *Grindleford*

## Gaiters

### Grindleford Gaiters: 500 Walks

The Gaiters walking group have just passed another milestone by completing our 500th walk. The group was set up in 2000, but missed the first 3 months or so of walking due to the foot and mouth restrictions then in place. Once that obstacle was passed the Gaiters have walked almost every fortnight since - right up to the Covid lockdown. We are now walking fortnightly again.

Throughout the years, the group has enjoyed walks in almost every corner of the Peak and Derbyshire; within about a 45 minute travel time to the walk start / finish location. Gaiters groups have also had many memorable holidays in good walking areas in England & Wales, as well as Austria.

Below are a few photographs from walks undertaken over the years:



*Chee Dale**Roaches**Northumberland**Cornwall**Ashford**Cadair Idris*

The Gaiters walk fortnightly on Thursdays, generally meeting outside the church at 9:30. Our Walk leaders usually select a walk suitable for the conditions at the time.

Our 3 month walking schedule is shown here. Our next walk in October will be on the 7th. (Unusually the Oct 7th walk meets earlier at the station in order to catch the 09:23 train to New Mills).

We welcome new Grindleford walkers to our group. Most walks are typically about 5 miles; so to join us you will need to be fit enough to walk this distance over Peak District terrain, such as moorland and rocky paths. You should also be suitably equipped and bring a hot drink or water. At the end of our walks we enjoy a good lunch at a local hostelry. Keep walking. Tim Reynolds 630023.

7th October

21st October

4th November

18th November

2nd December

16th December

# THE BAKEWELL ELEPHANT

We are familiar with the song from of our childhood of –  
*“Nellie the elephant packed her trunk, and said goodbye to the circus,  
 off she went with a trumpets trump, Trump trump trump”*

For Nellie there was a happy ending as she returned to the jungles of Hindustan. However, in 1905 a bid for freedom by an elephant at a circus in Bakewell ended in a fusillade of shots and ignominious disposal.

At the start of the twentieth century travelling circus were very popular, with one of the most famous being Sangers Circus which visited Bakewell every year.



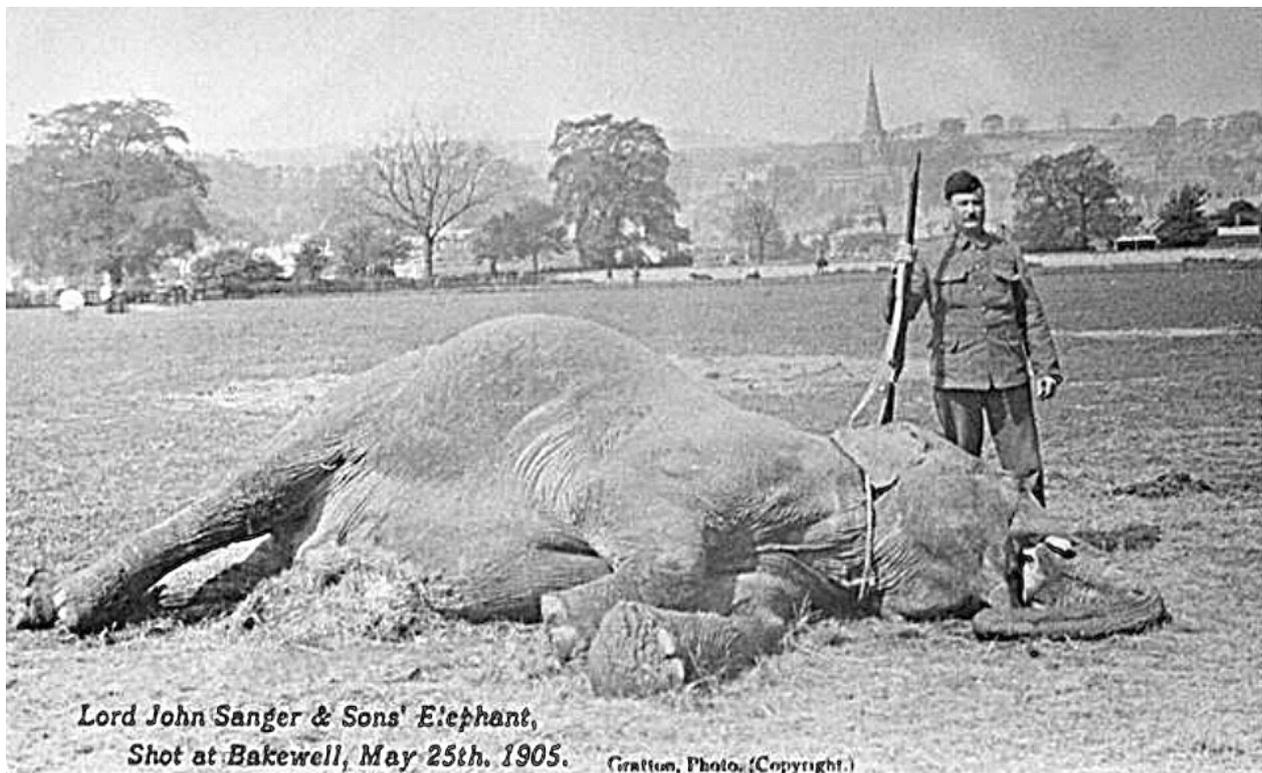
Sangers Circus elephants and menagerie passing through Matlock in 1900.

The circus set up on the site of the present Deepdale Business Park. The “star” elephant was an old bull called “Old Paul” or strangely “Phylis.” For any elephant to be confined and forced to undertake tricks must have been deeply disturbing for what are highly intelligent and emotional animals.

There are a number of versions as to what happened on that fateful day of the 25th May 1905. In one version Old Paul was on heat and as such he was not easy to control when a vindictive person gave him a handful of sweets which contained a carpet tack. The pain within his sensitive trunk made him mad and he set off in the direction of Youlgreave.

Another version has the elephant taking hold of one of the main tent poles and shaking it which caused panic within the audience. Keepers tried to intervene using pitch forks but were badly injured with one keeper being crushed and another having a tusk through his thigh and could not stop the justifiably enraged elephant breaking out of the Big Top.

Whatever the actual facts poor Old Paul was regarded as too dangerous to handle and local soldiers from the Notts & Derby Regiment under Sergeant - Major Shepherd, who were training in the area, were called upon to assist. Horribly, attempts were made to poison the elephant which caused him further distress and a decision was made to shoot Old Paul with “dum dum big game stoppers.”

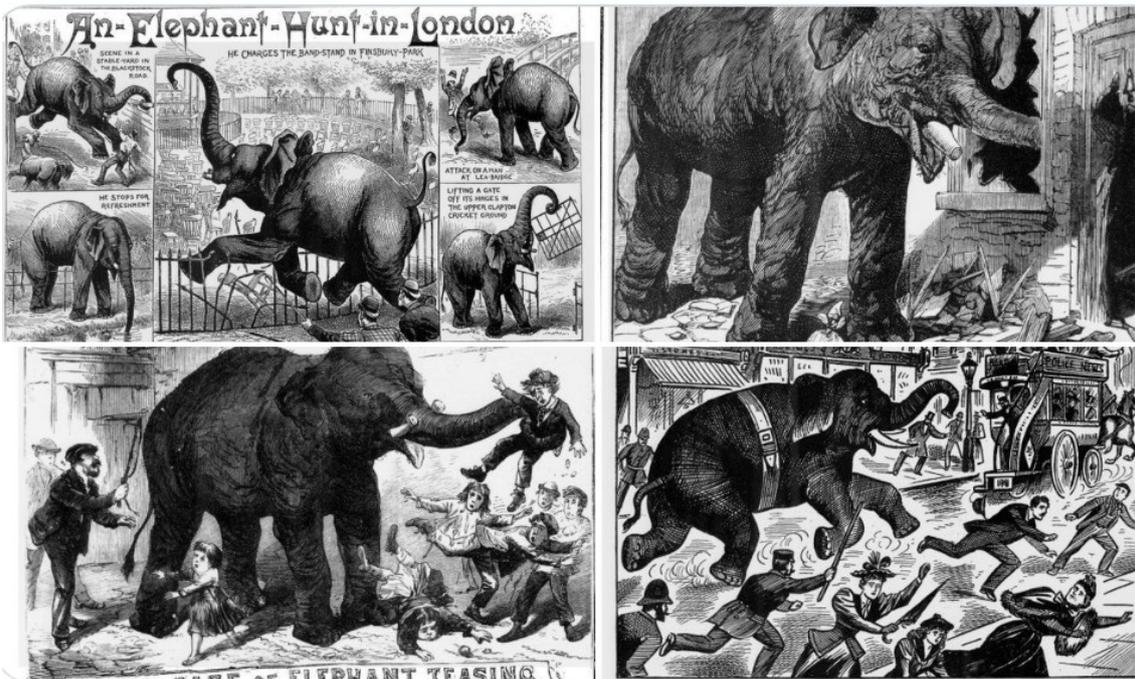


Old Paul was found to be 12 feet's from head to tail, 17 feet from trunk to tail, 18 feet in girth and he weighed four tons.

The ignominy was not yet over for Old Paul - he lay in the field and the next day children climbed all over his body and had their photographs taken. One story has it that as the children sat on the elephant, gasses from within lead to a final trumpet call. The body was then taken to the local tip and this beautiful animal was hung in chains from his feet before being dumped - he lies there to this day. Sadly, a move to have the area renamed the “Elephants Graveyard” was not adopted. A foot from Old Paul is in the Bakewell Museum but it is one of five recorded feet from the poor animal !



This problem with Old Paul was not an isolated one and there are recorded instances of keepers being picked up in the trunk and banged on the ground (Burnley 1899) and five elephants escaped (Dartford 1900) and raided a bakery shop - breaking the window and eating the contents - one elephant, Minnie, was later found fast asleep in a garden.



It was only on the 20th January 2020, that the Government passed a law banning the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in England, Scotland and Wales.

Thankfully, no more elephants will have to go through the ordeal suffered by Old Paul on that fateful day in 1905.

Virginia McKenna, OBE, on behalf of the “Born Free” Charity said “At last it has brought an end to the prospect of life in the circus being inflicted on captive wild animals in the name of entertainment.”

# Grindleford Parish Council

Sarah Battarbee, Parish Clerk,  
 Overgrindle, Sir William Hill Road, Grindleford, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32  
 2HS ☎ 01433 630674  
 ✉ grindleparish@gmail.com

There have been fewer than usual planning applications, but one in particular has been given quite a bit of thought by Councillors. That's the application by the PDNPA to expand Brunts Barn. The Council has no objections to the actual expansion, as it is for people to come and enjoy the Peak District, but issues relating to parking, road maintenance and access remain unanswered. The Council is pursuing.

Councillors are once again considering whether or not to raise the Parish Precept to generate more money. You may recall the discussion at the start of last year. There was a move to raise the precept to support the playground overhaul, although in the event the playground group raised most of the money themselves, with the Council making a £2000 donation towards it. The Council would be interested to hear of any similar projects which are in need of money to inform their decision about the precept which must be made in January next year.

This News has been published before the next parish council meeting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>, so please look out in the next News for more details as to what will be proposed. Elsewhere, we have a new County Councillor, Alasdair Sutton (Con) following in the footsteps of Cllr Judith Twigg. Mrs Twigg has now retired. She is a hard act to follow as she was extremely generous to this village; we owe her the paving at the church and a grant to fund the tree group. She also gave us some money to help us promote the shop. Alasdair was able to join us briefly at our previous meeting and we met him for longer in September. We welcome him to Grindleford.

Segueing neatly, you may already have seen the paving at the church, which replaces the mudbath under the bread store which was somewhat endangering life and limb. Our own Chairman was hugely instrumental in making that happen and then, having been on the board of directors for the project, put on his boiler suit and laid the slabs too. Thanks to the other chaps in the picture, great work all round.



The tree group, (contact Paul Thorpe), has been very active and as well as planning tree planting is also putting some into the ground, with a gang of willing helpers. They have spoken to the Council about an ornamental tree in the Jubilee Gardens, and this will be discussed next year as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. There is some work to do to prepare for possible winter floods, so no planting can take place until that's been finalised and sorted.

We have a new gardener looking after Jubilee Gardens who will be able to do some stonework repairs as well. (This segueing is getting out of hand.) Finally, we are getting a new noticeboard. It should arrive in the next week or so. The old noticeboard finally gave up the ghost when one of the hinges gave way and the door swung mysteriously open. The new board is metal so won't need maintaining to the same degree, and is a charming green. The Council is back to meeting face to face at the Pavilion, as is the law, and anyone who would like to attend is very welcome, just contact the Clerk [grindleparish@gmail.com](mailto:grindleparish@gmail.com). We have a new start time of 7 pm. Agendas are posted in the (currently old) noticeboard and also on the Grindleford Parish Council website. You'll find all the minutes on there, up to date news on things like road closures, and some cracking photographs. Please do take a moment and check it out, it's a great village resource.

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# Peter's Page

## *News from Derbyshire Dales District Council*

Councillors have recently spent a lot of time discussing and debating the continuing problems with the refuse collection service. Serco, who provide the service, don't have enough drivers, which is why the garden waste collection was suspended, no extra cardboard etc is being collected, nor any food waste. Serco blame the national situation and Brexit, and asked the Council to pay for 50% of the cost of a pay rise. Many Councillors, including myself, opposed this on the grounds that Serco are a multi-national company and were fully aware of the consequences of Brexit when they signed the contract in September 2020. However it was agreed, along with the service reductions, on the casting vote of the Chair of the Council. I hope that the situation will improve, tho at the time of writing, there isn't unfortunately much sign of it.



The human consequences of the events in Afghanistan are unbelievably tragic. The Council is playing its part to help, by making 8 homes available for refugee families. None of them are in Grindleford or our neighbouring villages (as there are none available), but they will be offered support by the County Council. If people want to make donations, City of Sanctuary in Sheffield and Stand Up to Racism in Chesterfield will both be grateful. Locally, Christine Upton at Baslow Post Office and Stores is coordinating the collection of toys and games for refugee children.

Another disappointment on the issue of moorland fires caused by the irresponsible use of BBQ's and camp fires. I proposed making them illegal on our moors etc, supported by Matt Buckler from Stanton, and all the opposition Councillors. This was however rejected by the Majority Group on the Council, on the grounds that there isn't a serious enough problem in the Derbyshire Dales and it would be difficult to enforce. People can reach their own conclusion!

Quite a few residents have asked me about the political make up of the Council. There are 39 Councillors: 20 are Conservative, 7 are Liberal Democrat, 6 are Independent, 4 are Labour and 2 are Green. 2 of the Independents sit with the Conservatives and 3 with the Green Party. In 2023, Grindleford, Hathersage, Abney and Eyam (the Hathersage and Eyam Ward) which I represent will be joined by Stoney Middleton.

Finally, remember that I have a small amount of funding available for local organisations, to help them with new ideas or projects. Each grant is normally between £100 and £200.

**Cllr Peter O'Brien**

**tel: 639683 e: [peter.obrien@derbyshiredales.gov.uk](mailto:peter.obrien@derbyshiredales.gov.uk)**

# THE THURSDAY CLAP

Clap. ClapClap. Bang - Clap  
from doors and windows in  
our cul-de-sac.

Yes we're here, BangClap  
good to see you, ClapClapClapClap,  
smile, wave, thumbs-up – Fine! – oh

It's over. Close the door.  
Nasreen at Number 1  
shrinks from her half-drunk husband.

Love long clapped out, only a sigh escapes  
as she re-hides the secret bag  
she'd stowed to get away.

At Number 3, Bob claps the last and longest  
claps. Swollen with tears, he goes to bed  
and clings to a life-raft pillow, his

head filled with the suck and  
pump of oxygen into the lungs  
he loves, the man he loves,

not here. At Number 5 young Max  
will not stop banging pans until his  
mum snatches his wooden spoon,

so, pan on head, he pins a house-fly  
on his compass-point, peels off its wings and feeds it to  
a Venus fly-trap – wanting Jaws

to snap shut on his finger, shooting  
blood. At Number 6 unclapping Joy tuts as his squeals  
leak through their party walls. Deep in her solitary

life, she fills the squares of crosswords  
cell by cell. And me, at Number 9, I wait till clapping's  
done, then clap myself aboard

my well-oiled bike, and ride through silent streets  
to bleeping wards. Bound tight in scrubs, cap, mask and  
long blue gown I'm seeping sweat into

my visored eyes. Salt-stung I hold an iPad  
to an ashen face, and Facetime Bob  
to let him say goodbye.

Written by Barbara Crossley of Tideswell, winning first prize in the writing  
competition at the Grindleford Show

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## Lunch Club (the return)

It seems appropriate that in the same issue that pays respect to all that Carol Galbraith did with the Lunch Club, we should also announce its return. The important date for your diary is **Thursday October 14<sup>th</sup> 12.30 pm at the Pavilion**. We will of course welcome all the previous attendees (don't worry – I have the list from Carol and will be making a few calls) but would also like to welcome new members to the group. There is no upper or lower age limit – just so long as you are a current (or previous) resident of the village and have free time during the day to join us for a light lunch and a chat / catch up. There will be a small charge to cover costs.

At the time of writing it is difficult to judge what the uptake may or may not be but hopefully enough people will feel the time is right. I very much hope that this first venture leads to a settled pattern of lunch club meetings.

In order to determine the level of catering needed it is necessary to let me know beforehand whether you are able to attend. If you want to come along as a volunteer helper that would also be most welcome. You can either contact me by Facebook messenger or by going old school and ringing the landline – 630221. The answerphone is always on.

Joy Benn

# PROGRESS WITH TREE PLANTING

The Grindleford tree planting group continues to meet regularly. Our aim is to plant trees to enhance our local habitats; to provide more wildlife corridors in the village that in turn attracts insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals; to make an effort to address climate change at a very local level; perhaps to help prevent flooding; and to bring people together to learn about and care for our environment and have a good time!

We have had maintenance sessions in June and September, for the new native hedging which were planted in May by a happy band of villagers – details in the July edition of Grindleford News. The hedging is growing very well and progress is being monitored by the group, including an extremely helpful Duke of Edinburgh student, Millie, who has been checking on the planting. We particularly enjoyed clipping and strimming the long grass and brambles, whilst being entertained by the local band which was playing from the neighbouring garden during Carnival week!

We think it would be great to have a bench installed at the top of the bonfire field and would welcome suggestions on how this could be achieved.

We are planning further projects in public spaces in the village and on National Trust land. The Playing Fields committee has kindly agreed to 2 further projects, as follows: To move some self-set Alder trees "espaliering" themselves up against the river side of the MUGA enclosure. They were to be removed due to a risk of damaging the MUGA surface, so our plan is to try and dig them up and relocate them. They are only a few years old, minimal trunk circumference and are between 1-2 metres tall, about 10 in number. We will do this one day in early November if anyone is keen to help, please let us know.

To plant a line of hedging along the back of the MUGA (not the river side) down as far as the stone wall to edge the large grassy area behind the MUGA.

There is a stream that will run adjacent to the planting area so we will plant native species which are suited to these conditions.

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) have shown a keen interest in our group and projects and have already accepted an application for 600 trees to plant as 120 metres of hedging. These will be small plug grown saplings again: Hawthorn, Rowan, Downy Willow, Alder, Dog Rose. They are due to arrive November 17<sup>th</sup>, so we envisage a few days of planting towards the end of November. The area will need some preparation work before planting, much like before and it would be great if we could enlist the help of as many of the village that would like to help. It would also be great if we could encourage another Duke of Edinburgh student to volunteer with us again.

Do get in touch if you are interested in lending a hand in any way you can and we can add you to our contact list and let you know the details.

Contact: [paul.thorpe@hotmail.com](mailto:paul.thorpe@hotmail.com)

# The Grindleford Wheat Patch

If you've walked through the allotment in the last year you might have noticed a small patch of wheat appear.



I like to grow something that's a bit different to what you can buy in the shops: a Mexican herb, a white tomato, a heritage melon. It all adds to the spice of life and makes eating nutritious food a joyous experience.

One thing I'd not considered trying before was wheat. My perception was that it would take a lot of space, involve a lot of back breaking work and require a lot of machinery that I don't have access to. Then the end product wouldn't be enough for all of the energy that went into it. So when I spotted an email from a local organic veg provider asking for volunteers with any garden space to try growing wheat I was immediately hooked. All I had to provide was the growing part of the process which could be as small as a pot in the back garden. Then I could pass the wheat onto someone else and my share of the flour would be sent back to me. Great.

So, in Autumn 2020 we prepared one of our allotment beds that had not been recently fed and that we knew would get a lot of sun during the summer. In October we planted the two types of heritage winter wheat seeds in four rows and then waited to see what happened. By mid November a very successful germination rate meant there were four rows of plants lined up with no gaps.

It was quite a surprise to find that all of the plants had survived the wet January. Being on one of the lower lying allotment plots anything that is overwintered has to not mind some time under water. Wheat is reminiscent of summer days and sunshine so it's testament to plants and their ability to find a way to grow that it survived the flooding.

During the heatwave over summer I had to live out of the village for a few weeks. So once again it was up to the wheat to persevere in unusual weather. Once again, when I was able to check on it the wheat was still standing tall despite the ground looking dry and cracked around it.

One thing I didn't anticipate was that all of the wheat would germinate, grow and survive. So by the time it came around to drying it I realised I didn't have much space to dry it under cover. The advice here was to arrange the wheat into a stook. We tried this. It fell over. Fortunately my peas hadn't grown very well this year and there was plenty of space on the support framework to lean the sheaves until threshing day.

The main question I've had over the year is what am I going to do with it? A fair question as it seems an awful lot of work for one person to try to grow enough wheat for a bag of flour. This is where the Sheffield Wheat Experiment comes in. Can a group of small growers use their growing space for something that you would normally grow on a larger scale and then combine those efforts?

It turns out that yes we can. The team's original plan for the Sheffield Wheat Experiment was born out of the empty shelves we experienced at the start of the first lockdown in 2020. When I took my dried wheat along to them in the centre of Sheffield I got a guided tour of the next part of the process. All of the growers were asked to take our wheat along on the same day, or drop it off to them just before threshing day, which you could also take part in if you wanted to. All the wheat was pooled and checked and then threshed in batches. I have to admit I stood quite far away whilst they demonstrated threshing. The grain is then separated and needs to dry for around three months before it is ground into flour. So it will be bagged up and sent out to the growers to arrive just in time for Christmas. 100% of the grains will be used, either ground into flour, sent to a local brewery for making beer or sent out as seeds for the 2021/22 growing season.

Being part of the community growing wheat we received quite a bit of information over the course of the year around food provenance, the benefits of growing heritage grains and the benefits of smaller scale alternative food growing methods. Much of this information is available on the Sheffield Wheat Experiment website. There's an interesting session by the Small Food Bakery covering some of the principles behind this kind of community growing of heritage variety wheat which explains the 'revolutionary power of a loaf of bread' far better than I can.

The flour I receive isn't going to cause too much of a dent in the local economy. I'll still be buying bread provided by local bakeries. If anything, the project provides an appreciation of the smaller local independent providers who add diversity to the food supply. It celebrates the principles that mean that something that's different to the majority can be amazing.

It takes the emphasis away from trying to create a product that is designed for the process and places it on the taste or nutrition of the food itself. And something that doesn't quite look the same as everything else doesn't mean it's not just as tasty. The not-quite-square loaf, the slightly wonky pie and the comedy shaped carrot are all still edible and can therefore remain in the food chain rather than adding to unnecessary food waste.

The Sheffield Wheat Experiment hasn't secured funding yet for the 2021/22 year. However, as a minimum they are providing seeds again from this years harvest and there will be a communal threshing event in Autumn 2022. If their funding is granted they're hoping to do some more educational and group events bringing the local growers together to learn more about organic and sustainable small scale food growing.

Currently it's the people involved in the first year of growing that are being invited to plant again. However, anyone interested in the project can check out their website or contact the project team to ask how to get involved.

[www.thesheffieldwheatexperiment.co.uk](http://www.thesheffieldwheatexperiment.co.uk)



Kathryn Gilmore

# The “Grindsay”

## The “Butterfly Field” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

### Introduction.

A few years ago, I was “between” research projects, so decided to take advantage of the recently-digitized collection of British Newspapers, available online through a subscription to “FindMyPast”. I wasn’t expecting Grindleford to have made the national press very often pre-1950, but to my huge surprise, there were over 20,000 “hits”! I decided for starters, therefore to limit my search to “Goatscliff”, which proved to be more manageable. There are some fascinating snippets to be found, of which this article is just one. It features the field by the Bridge known as “The Grin(d)say”, today better known as the “Butterfly Field”, and offers one man’s reflection on times gone by - in this case, fifty years prior to its publication in 1842 - in other words, the late 18th Century.

A word of explanation may be appropriate before I introduce the article, as it includes a word which may be unfamiliar to us today - “ICABOD”.

My first thought was of “Ichabod Crane”, in the Legend of Sleepy Hollow”, a book written by Washington Irving, in 1819, but more appropriately, in context, it would appear to be a Biblical reference, meaning “The Glory of God is Departed”, an expression that was, perhaps, in common usage at the time.

Whilst the author is unnamed, he (or she) appears to have shared similar views to John Ruskin (1819-1900). Ruskin was an early conservationist, art critic, and philosopher, reputed to have said of the coming of the Railway, and in particular the building of the Monsal Head Viaduct :

*“The valley is gone, and the Gods with it; and now, every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half-an-hour and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton... and let it be said that is a good exchange of fools...”*

So, be prepared for some flowery prose, telling it like it is, was, or might have been, for Grindlefordians, in the latter part of the 18th, and early 19th centuries!

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This article was published originally by the *Sheffield Iris*, 10th May 1842, page 3.

### MAY-DAY AT GRINDSAY, IN THE HIGH PEAK.

*"Spring glads all hearts, 'tis then our joys abound  
Sweet as the flowers, and fresh as heavenly dews".*

THE WANDERER'S ROMANET.<sup>2</sup>

**ICABOD** may now be said to almost all our ancient provincial pastimes and holidays. Christmas now-a-days is better understood by its snow storm and chilliness, than its yule clog [*sic*] and hearty merriment. Easter passes with only some bare remembrance of hot cross buns and spon [*sic*] new garments. A shy at a cock on Shrove Tuesday has become a serious misdemeanour; and as for glorious May-day, if it were not natural for our hearts to hail it as the advent of some pleasant merry months, it might pass unheeded by, like any other in the usual routine of life. Why is all this? Is it that we are less regardful of them, than were our revered sires and dames before us? Is there a weariness come over us that we refuse to partake of the enjoyments which once so much delighted? Or is it that we have grown poor in spirit, and act the niggard to the rising generation? Perhaps enlightenment has thrown all vulgar excitements, as they may be termed, into the shade; perhaps we may attribute our indifference to refinement; perhaps to the steam-engine; perhaps to the poor laws; be it what it may, certain it is whenever we look at the days that are gone, we cannot help exclaiming, "*the glory is departed*". The valley of Grindsay, however, retains something of its pristine vigour; at all events it still preserves the ghost of a ceremony if it does nothing else. We have been young, and can well remember it.

Let us once more call to recollection Grindsay some fifty odd years ago. There, as in many other localities in the Peak of Derbyshire, as the first of April is ushered in with whim and drollery, so the last, or the eve of May, concludes and finishes with a catalogue of mischief. It is still called "*mischief night*" among the rustics, and they fully justify the name they bestow on it. Still their mischief is neither heartless nor offensive; partaking rather of the froaks [*sic - frolics?*] of a Robin Good-fellow, than any wicked or malicious sprite. A neighbouring farmer may consequently find, at the dawn of May, that a sheep, or a pig, has been carried off during the night and is carefully impounded, and may be released for the trouble of fetching; or a gate, somewhat insecure on the hinge, has been fitted to some other post; or perhaps sent floating on the nimble waves of gentle Derwent. Perhaps his wain has been emptied of a heavy load of lime stone which is left on the roadside, to find its way to Sheffield in the best way it can; while the waggon itself has been dragged into some neighbouring bog, by hands unseen, as stalwart and sinewy as those of a Sampson or a Jonathan.

These vagaries are not, however, altogether free from devilries. Where a curmudgeon of a neighbour has made himself offensive, although May-morn may smile upon him in sunshine and beauty; yet he may be found wondering why his chimney smokes so dreadfully, and have to discover that it is not the gentle breath of Zephyr which deprives him of the enjoyment of his cakes and tea, but an obstinate whisp of straw that figures in the chimney pot, as much to say, "keep your smoke and soot to yourself". Or should some sturdy hypocritical tapster, who has been in the habit of drawing foul liquor; or is known to press hard for chinks behind the door, escape without a clean panel or a full measure of chagrin, mad Robin must have been very idle indeed. Such was May-eve fifty years ago, and something like the ghost of it was May-eve in the year of grace, 1842, and a graceless eve it was.

But it is May-day to which we must especially refer. "There was a time", as the old story begins; but

*"Lack-a-daisy, lacking freshness,  
Lack-adaisy, lacking daisies".*

Those days are lacking now. The times have changed. Still the little chapter of the Sexagenarian must be written, and his little story told.

There was then a lord of Leam; and a lord of Nether Padley; and another of Stoke; and Stoke Hall was tenanted; joy was under its roof-tree, and a welcome near its hearth. And when May-day came round, the golden coin found its way to the green of Grindsay, from each lordship, that the villagers might make merry, and in the joyousness of their hearts thank God for the return of the season of sunshine and plenty. We remember the season full fifty years ago. Old Lias was the Jack in the green, and Solomon Alum<sup>3</sup> then enacted Bull Frog to the life. Old Lias has been gathered to his fathers, and so have the May King and Queen of those days, but there are young ones to supply their places; and as to Bull Frog, he yet lives, though time and strong drink have made him somewhat decrepit, blind, blustering, and crusty. The day was a glorious one. It was more like the twenty-first of June than the first of May; and "the May King was merrie and bussed the Queen", and Bull Frog was croaking and chuffing and calling everybody, and Jack was rolling his laurel-green and flowery sides among the assembled company, who were enjoying their dance of ribbons, and clattering music; when a new party as gay and as noisy as themselves appeared on Goatcliff wending their light fantastic steps to Grindsay Brig. They soon joined the holiday folks, among whom for a moment they appeared to have thrown the apple of discord, for the young and handsome youths of the strange party began romping with the fair lasses of Grindsay; while their Amazonian companions in petticoats danced off with their partners, who were no little chagrined to find that the strange lads were not only in possession of their partners, but that they themselves were unwilling captives to their unwelcome lovers.

Grindsay was in uproar; the dancing and pipings were staid; Bull Frog bellowed at the top of his stentorian lungs; Jack rolled his no longer wieldy evergreens along the sward; the wicketers left their bats and stumps, while the excited swains were shaking their sullen sides in the embrace of their tyrant queens, and refused to be charmed by the voice of such obstreperous and desperate charmers. But the mystery must be told. Lady Bradford<sup>4</sup> was at the time residing at Stoke. She and a large party of her visitors, for the nonce, had donned the male attire, and robing their masculine friends in silken sheen and furbelows, had (thus appareled) intermingled among the rustic enjoyers of the feast of May, and interrupted their equanimity. It was, however, soon discovered who were the beautiful Arcadian youths that had won the hearts of the May-day Queen and her maidens; who were the Amazonians that overcame the Grindsay Lotharios. The discovery ended in a merry feast, such as one has not since been witnessed under the ashes and sycamores of Haywood and "the Howff".

The anniversary of birds and flowers, in the present year, falling on the Sabbath, Monday was considered entitled to a holiday. The day was lovely in the extreme, The scene was the same, Man may change, but Nature never does. Tadgness was again crowned with a verdant wreath of beauty, and the winds whispered their melody along the majestic slopes of Sir William. The sweet river rolled in "murmurs magical" over its rocky bed, dancing in joyful lightness over the branches and fragments that impeded its progress. The heavens and earth were flooded with sunshine, and the air was full of song. But the lord of Leam was not there; Nether Padley did not participate in the festival; Stoke Hall is tenantless, and mouldering in ruin.

Towards the close of Monday, a solitary angler was seen lashing the waters of the Derwent at the ford of Grindsay: and a few hearty wicketers, who met on the bridge, as was their wont in yore, were told that the new tenant did not grant the permission to enjoy their game on Grindsay, which had never been denied before. There was a churlish bolt drawn across the door of *The Maynard Arms*, so long known as the favourite resort of all true lovers of Nature, which in the valley of Grindsay is displayed in all the placid beauty of a *Claude*, or the solemn grandeur of a *Salvator Rosa*. The little village appeared palsey stricken.

From a miserable hovel, which kept up the show of a feast, might now and then be heard the tuneless scrapings of a fiddle, or, perhaps something that had been one; and the ears of the passenger and wayfarer were only greeted with intemperate speech, or harsher oaths; which increased with the quantity of the intoxicating and deleterious beverage the rioting inmates were imbibing. On such occasions the night is usually past in excess and stupidity.

It was at the close of the second day, drawing on to midnight, when the rain was falling, that a motley group resigned their cups and quitted their company, wet within and wet without; and wended their uneven steps to their respective homes to cheer their parents, or their babes and spouses, with companionship we shall not venture to describe.

For the former festivities of MAY-DAY AT GRINDSAY there is but one word, and that is *Icabod*.

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Thus ends an account which, I feel will resonate with us today - in looking back at the “good old days” in comparison with the present day, reflecting on what is lost. But also to reflect on what has been gained. John Ruskin’s argument, that building of the Monsal Viaduct had spoiled the valley, might be said to have come full circle, as the Viaduct and its surrounds are now considered to be one of Derbyshire’s beauty spots. And likewise the Grindsay, apparently not the most welcoming of places in 1842, is now greatly admired as the Butterfly Field. Whilst it might not a place for “frolics” as it once was, it must surely be said that “Icabod” has been banished, and the gods have returned - whoever they may be! I hope so, at any rate!

Rosemary Lockie, September 2021.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> The *Sheffield Iris* was a weekly newspaper published between 1795 and 1848.

[Sheffield Iris on Wikipedia](#)

<sup>2</sup> It was customary at the time to introduce articles with a short verse. I have no idea what a “Romanet” is!

<sup>3</sup> This was, I assume, a reference to a gentleman named “Solomon Hallam”!

<sup>4</sup> Lady Bradford (1739-1800) was formerly Elizabeth Simpson, daughter of the Rev. John Simpson of Stoke Hall, She married Henry Bridgeman, at Eyam in 1755. He was created Baron Bradford in 1794.

# Hope Valley Climate Action

On Sunday 18th July, supporters gathered to mark the launch of Hope Valley Climate Action's sustainable travel pilot, Travelling Light.

The project aims to find innovative ways of decarbonising rural travel and managing the impact of high visitor numbers on a significant landscape. Travelling Light is being developed in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and the Peak District National Park Authority.

At the launch, the group assembled in Bamford to hear speeches from High Peak MP, Robert Lorgan, Leader of Derbyshire County Council, Cllr Barry Lewis and the Travelling Light team. Many having arrived on foot or by bike, the group continued their journey through the Hope Valley by train to Hathersage, where they were welcomed on the platform by Derbyshire Dales MP, Sarah Dines, and Civic Chair, Cllr Steve Wain. They completed their route on foot along the riverside path back to Bamford.

Over 5 years, the pilot will trial an integrated approach to low carbon travel, combining walking and cycling for everyday purposes, high quality, joined-up public transport and reduced dependency on fossil fuel powered vehicles.

Currently in the development stage, the Travelling Light team are keen to get as many people as possible involved in shaping the project. Contact project officer, Mandy Holden, to get involved. Email: [hopevalleytravellinglight@gmail.com](mailto:hopevalleytravellinglight@gmail.com)



# Grindleford Traffic Group

The Grindleford Traffic Survey, which went to every household in the village, showed that the three main concerns for villagers are:

Speeding

Parking

Safe walking and cycling

Grindleford Parish Council thanks all of you who took the trouble to return the forms and is looking closely at what can be done to address your very real concerns. The Traffic Group is scrutinising specific issues and will post further updates, both in The Grindleford News and on the Grindleford Parish Council website:

[www.grindlefordparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.grindlefordparishcouncil.co.uk)

or find via the village website: [www.grindleford.com](http://www.grindleford.com)

The full traffic survey report is also available via these websites.

Following the survey, the immediate actions are to pursue

- a school crossing warden
- 'SCHOOL' to be painted on the road, particularly for traffic coming from Hathersage
- To reinstate the central white line in the road by the school on the B6001

The currently intractable problem is with the policy of Derbyshire County Council's very tight budget constrictions and their retrospective protocols. Nevertheless, the Parish Council is lobbying with tenacity for our village safety.

On a more positive note, the Community Speedwatch Group is now in action; it has had a very successful trial session with the Police attending. The essential equipment has now been purchased and the Group will be springing into action. Each set-up location has to be duly assessed, but we are confident that this can include the 40mph sections as well as the 30mph.

Any public-spirited reader of this would be extremely welcome to join the Group. The induction training is straightforward and fun. Please join to help our village safety. Email [raywhiteley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:raywhiteley@hotmail.co.uk) or any member of the Parish Council.

You can help our village traffic problems in other ways: by sending us feedback with your particular concerns, with helpful suggestions or ideas to ease the density of on-street parking problems, even by parking only one of your vehicles outside your property so as to share the restricted street parking in the centre of the village. There is always space by and beyond the Allotments (The old Playing Field). As you will see from the Highway Code, pavement parking is not permitted and is also dangerous for our vulnerable groups. Parking large vehicles on the straight where

visibility is better is a win for owners and road users. We are lucky to have such a facility here in Grindleford (unlike Hathersage!)

Parking close to junctions and blocking dropped kerbs are contraventions of the law. It's really important that we observe these safety measures to ensure that everyone has visibility and access. A locally friendly and observant approach to other residents will always be appreciated.

It's helpful to remind ourselves of the laws with this brief summary from the Highway Code:

The 2021 Highway Code has the following rules about parking which are relevant to our problems in Grindleford.

*Section 239.*

*Do not park facing against the traffic flow, stop as close as you can to the side, do not stop too close to a vehicle displaying a Blue Badge: remember, the occupant may need more room to get in or out.*

*Section 242*

*You MUST NOT leave your vehicle or trailer in a dangerous position or where it causes any unnecessary obstruction of the road.*

*Section 243*

*DO NOT stop or park near a school entrance, anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services, at or near a bus stop, opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space, near the brow of a hill, opposite (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle, where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users, in front of an entrance to a property, on a bend.*

*Section 244*

*You MUST NOT park partially or wholly on the pavement. Parking on the pavement can obstruct and seriously inconvenience pedestrians, people in wheelchairs or with visual impairments and people with prams or pushchairs.*

The rules governing speeding are very simple.

*Section 124*

*You must not exceed the maximum speed limits for the road or for your vehicle.*

*Section 146*

*Adapt your driving to the appropriate type and condition of road you are on.*

*Section 152*

*Residential Streets. You should drive slowly and carefully on streets where there are likely to be pedestrians, cyclists and parked cars.*

Grindleford Parish Council has already signed up to the 20's plenty pledge. The following gives you a broad view of how it helps, not only our community, but an international initiative.



A limit of 20mph in Grindleford village was the overwhelming response to the survey. Here are some of the benefits:

Why 20mph?

- 20mph is safer. It results in 20% fewer casualties.
- In an accident, the majority of people survive if vehicles are travelling at 20 mph, but not at 30 mph.
- A child is 3 times more likely to die if hit by a car in a 30mph area than in a 20mph one.
- Broad and lasting benefits accrue to people and the planet from normalising 20mph: 20mph limits fit with global goals for health, sustainability and the climate
- CO2 emissions are considerably reduced in line with Government targets
- Noise almost halves
- We need streets that cyclists and pedestrians can use safely. We have a public health emergency and there is a whole body of evidence that most chronic health conditions, are significantly improved if people are more active.
- Confident, sociable, independent, healthy, active travel habits form on safer streets
- 20mph on our streets brings freedom for residents to choose how they travel
- Councils have proved by adopting 20mph that it's affordable

It is said that 'it takes a village to raise a child'. Parents and carers fear traffic - more than unwanted encounters. Wide 20mph limits enable kids to get out - to relatives, friends, parks, shops, play, walk, scoot and cycle.

Elderly residents are nervous of speeding traffic; their sight, hearing and mobility may not be as acute as before. This can lead to isolation, anxiety, obesity and loneliness. All vulnerable groups have specific needs – 20 mph gives them more freedom and security.

The United Nations has endorsed the setting of 30 km/h (20 mph) maximum speed limits.

Over 30 Parish Councils in Derbyshire have signed up to 20's plenty, including Stoney Middleton and Eyam.

21 million people in the UK (almost 1 in 3 of the population) now live in Local Authorities which accept 20mph as the right speed limit where people live.

Our Villages – your journey. 20's plenty – keep it safe



## Friends of Grindleford Station

As the last issue of The Grindleford News went to press, we had recently been able to garden again. Our focus was the new bed on Platform 2 where we set to planting annuals to supplement the shrubs we planted last autumn. What we planted into can not be called 'soil' but rather 'clinker' and 'rubble' would be a more accurate description. So we were very grateful to Tom Lewis of Brunt's Barn for bringing, and spreading top soil to enrich this poor growing medium. To say how delighted we have been to see the sunflowers and dahlias thrive would be an understatement!



We were also very pleased to hold our first in person FOGS meeting since the beginning of the pandemic. It was great to get together and discuss our future plans.

Kay Allinson and Liz Baily met with the Volker Rail/ Story JV Community Engagement Officer who was positive about being able to recruit volunteers to help us with our projects at the station. Volker Rail/ Story JV has been contracted by Network Rail to complete the passing loop work'.

Mostly importantly, she was able to tell us that Volker/Story's base for the passing loop will be Dore and Totley and not Grindleford Station which will be a relief to local residents.

It was also lovely to be able to do our annual walk again. Jointly organised by Dore and Totley and Grindleford Station Friends groups and led by Chris Morgan of Dore, it is a walk from Dore Station to Grindleford Station following, as close as possible, the line of the Totley Tunnel. Chris is a mine of information about the Hope Valley Line so there was plenty of time to stop and catch our breath while learning about the history of the railway.

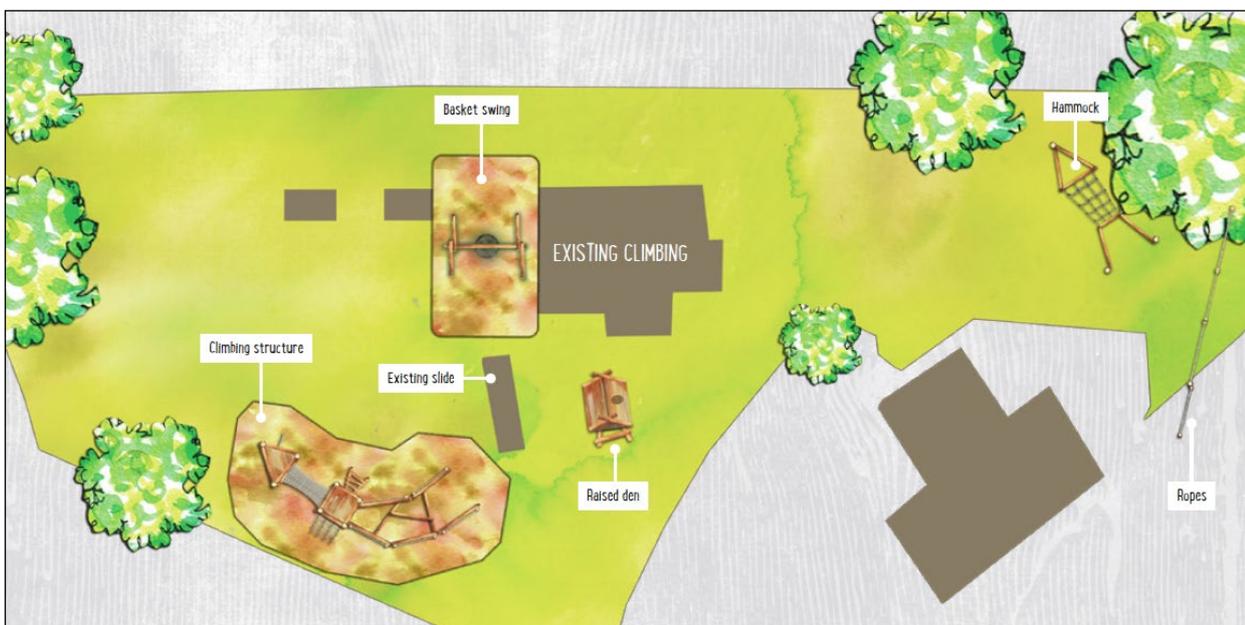


Our next job is to plant 250 red tulip bulbs so expect a stunning sight in spring.



## Playground Update

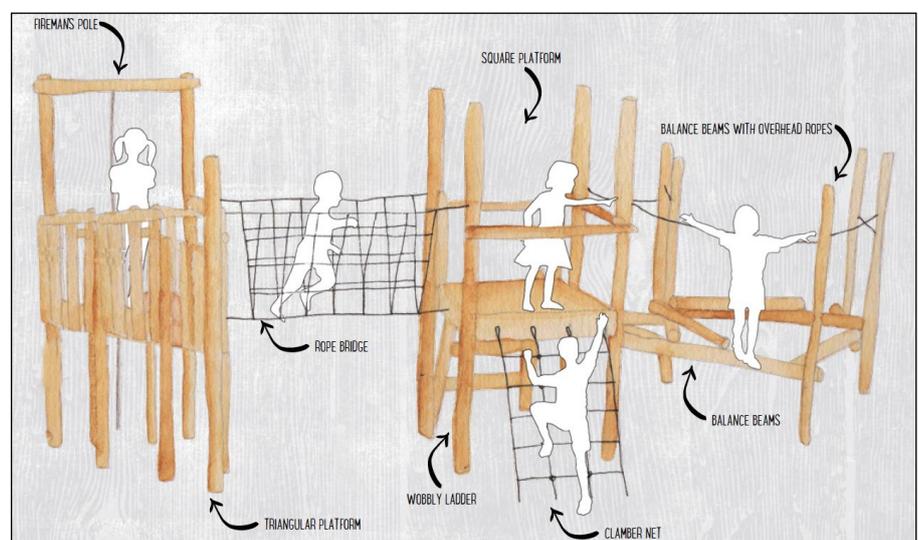
We now have a preliminary plan for the proposed changes envisaged for the play area development. This is shown below:



The plans under consideration include:

- a climbing frame for younger children
- a basket swing
- a den

The plan is still subject to change and a number of the features may well move and some be revised.



## New Furniture

Most of the Pavilion furniture has now been replaced or updated. We have new cushioned folding chairs, large flip top tables and new small square tables. This offers a high degree of flexibility in set up for both of our meeting rooms. This furniture can be set up meeting / conference style, so called cabaret style or theatre style.



This replacement of furniture has been achieved in part with the help of a generous donation from a village resident.

Set up and put away should also be easier using our wheeled flip top tables and our storage / transfer trolleys for the chairs.





The furniture can be set up in many different ways and combinations to suit your activity.

## Supper Club Starting

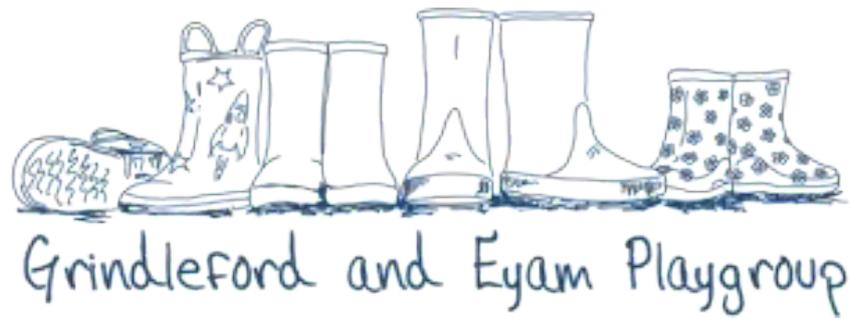
We are about to start a supper club. We intend to hold this on the last Friday evening of the month in the Pavilion. We have set the evening of Friday 29th October as the first event.

There will be a seasonal meal comprising main course, dessert and at the end coffee or tea accompanied by a short talk or a performance. There will be a charge set at £15 initially to cover meal and room costs; bring your own drinks. The event will be a fundraiser for the Pavilion and Playing Fields.

**On Friday 29th October, Alan Jacques will make a presentation including photographs from his archive of Grindleford in days gone by.**

Spaces will be limited to 24, at least at the beginning, this will provide reasonable room spacing considering Covid countermeasures. We would like to hear from anybody prepared to help on the night or in preparation, and, of course, from those who want to come along.

Please contact on 07501365825 to reserve a place on a first come first served basis.



Hi everyone,

We hope you've all had a lovely Summer. It's been a busy one for playgroup. We ran three holiday club sessions where we were joined by friends old and new for some fun in the forest. Groups got busy making bow and arrows, clay boggarts and shelters for furry friends. We were lucky with the weather and enjoyed being able to spend some time together during the holidays.



We were also very excited to be invited to this year's Grindleford Show where we held our ever popular 'Water or Wine' stall. It was great that the event was able to take place this year and despite the weather's best efforts a lovely time was had and we made £55 for playgroup!

We'd like to say a huge thank you to all the local businesses who supported us and donated bottles of wine.



At the start of September playgroup reopened after the holidays and we are already back into the swing of things. We've been joined by lots of new families, ready for a year of adventures. It's such a lovely time of year as children settle and new friends are made.

We have already enjoyed some of our favourite stories such as 'The Little Red Hen and Stone Soup', where we learnt about friendship and helping each other. The children had a fantastic time using pestles and mortars to grind grain and have helped to make delicious soup using the vegetables from the allotment.

Pulling up our turnips at the allotment was even more exciting after reading the 'Enormous Turnip'. Ours may have been smaller but everyone enjoyed chopping and slicing them before they were made into yummy veg crisps.



We're happy to confirm that our Mud Kitchen toddler group is restarting on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October. It will run weekly 10-11.30, costing £2.50 per child with tea and toast available for all. It's a lovely introduction to playgroup life as well as a chance to meet other local families. No booking required, just turn up and play! More information available on our website and social media pages.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Instagram

<https://www.facebook.com/Grindleford-and-Eyam-Playgroup-384845434973898/>

[https://instagram.com/grindlefordandeyam?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link](https://instagram.com/grindlefordandeyam?utm_medium=copy_link)

Visit our website for more information

<https://grindlefordandeyamplaygroup.org.uk/>

Email [gepsupervisor@hotmail.com](mailto:gepsupervisor@hotmail.com)

# OPERATION STARFISH

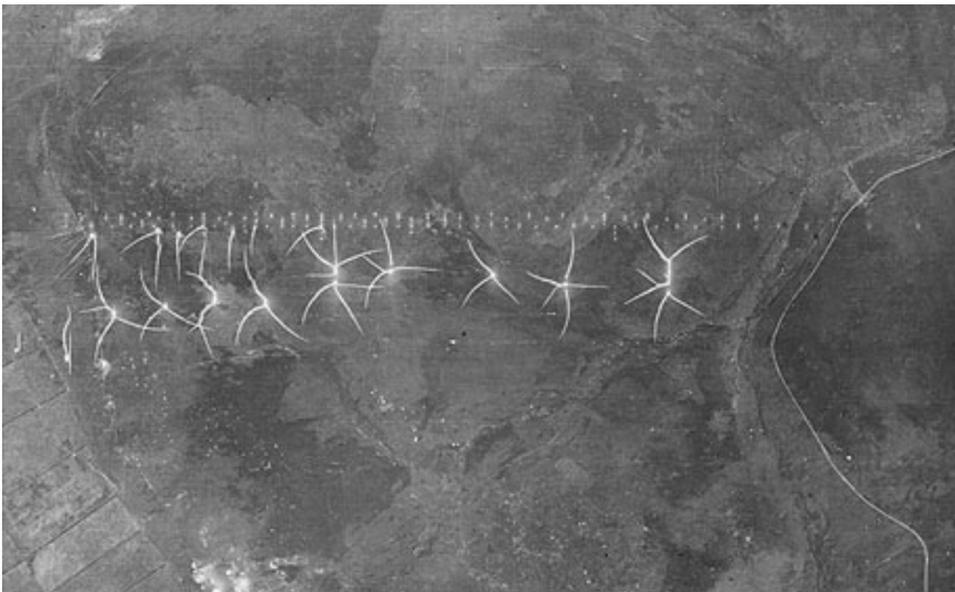
Between the 12th and 15th December 1940 Sheffield was bombed heavily due to its importance as a steel manufacturing centre and a being a vital component in wartime armaments production. As a result of the “Sheffield Blitz” over 600 people were killed and in response to this and other raids on the major cities something had to be done to lure the enemy bombers away from the cities.

This led to the setting up of the “Starfish Towns” with the aim of trying to convince German bombers to drop their bombs upon the decoy sites set up well away from the key cities.

The idea was conjured up by Colonel John Turner and has been referred to as a “stroke of Dad’s Army style genius” with over 237 Starfish sites were built to protect 81 locations.

They utilised the special effects department from the film industry, with Sound City working out how to mimic different kinds of lighting such as tram flashes, skylights, open doors, factory lighting and train lamps so as to create a realistic target. They experimented with different types of fire, how to safely manage it and how to keep the fires burning.

Two of these decoy sites were located close to Grindleford - one being the Houndskirk Moor Decoy and the other at Curbar Gap. These were top secret locations manned by RAF personnel who were billeted locally but sworn to secrecy. They were built in 1940 and manned throughout the war but little remains today of these important sites.



The Curbar Gap Decoy site.

The sites were ingenious with tanks of fuel located upon 20 ft high towers arranged to resemble rows of buildings and factories. When a bombing raid was detected, these controlled fires were lit to mimic the fires of the Sheffield steel furnaces. Using theatrical lighting and electrical operations that replicated the sparks created by moving trams, tanks of oil and tinfoil the aim was to con the bombers into bombing the moorland.



Raids were reported by telephone to the decoy sites and as soon as the bombers neared the city the fires were lit and the pyrotechnics put into operation - the whole thing took 2 minutes.



At Houndskirk Moor there was a guardhouse on the turnpike road, a control bunker, a diesel generator and a radar station. All that is now left are a few concrete foundations and ridges in the landscape. There is nothing visible at Curbar as the decoy site lies under the agricultural land.

There is reference to some bomb craters being located near the Houndskirk site and incendiary bombs being located at Curbar Gap.

Official figures released in 1946 show how effective the Starfish sites were with approximately 730 bombing raids being diverted onto the decoy sites. They were responsible for saving an estimated 2,500 lives and 3,000 injuries.

## Santa and the VW van – a deflated tale

It's nearly October = Christmas so I am going to tell you a Christmas story. About ten years ago we took the children to Newfoundland and toured around in a RV. It was the best fun and when we got back, in late August, the children and I thought it would be marvellous to make Andy laugh by buying a large inflatable Santa in his VW van to put on the lawn for Christmas. So I forked out £68 plus VAT and soon we were the happy owners of the said van with its famous driver. Santa did not have both hands on the wheel, as one was waving, and his cheeks were suspiciously red, but as he has magic powers we let that go. The van was inflated, by dint of plugging it in and letting the little pump thing do all the work, while Andy was out and we were all three delighted. It had little internal lights so not only was in an inflatable Santa, in a VW van, on our lawn, but it also glowed in the dark. What marvels the new century had provided us with! Then Santa was carefully deflated and stashed away in safe keeping for the festive season to come.

The festive season came, and Santa was equally carefully taken out again, and a brief inventory revealed that we had Santa, and the van, and the wire, and the pump, and the interior lights, but we did not have the bit of flex which connected all of that to the National Grid. It is a great mystery how things, solid, three-dimensional things, can just disappear. This house encloses a finite, discoverable space and we searched every square centimetre of it. We had put the inflatable in the cupboard, and we had taken it out of the cupboard. That was it. We hadn't taken it out for a walk, or buried it in the garden for a month, or left it out for the foxes. It was clearly following the same physical laws which tangle up Christmas lights even though they are neatly stashed in a sealed box in the loft. So, mystified, we sort of went quiet about Santa, and the VW van, and the whole kabooosh went into a bin liner in the vain hope that the little bit of tricky wire might rematerialize from whichever dimension it had disappeared into.

Some years went by and all attempts to replace the little bit of wire failed. I asked the electrician to fashion me one, but he refused. The internet yielded nothing. Santa maundered in his little shroud.

Last year during Covid I decided that I was having no more of this and a little bit of wire would be found. Intensive searches discovered a website which was dedicated entirely to inflatable Christmas nonsense. I emailed and explained my predicament. Within hours a very nice man called Tim had taken up our cause. He sent me photos of inflatable Santas (who knew? There are hundreds) so I could identify our very Santa. There he was. Could he supply the little bit of wire? He could not. But he could supply, for forty-five of our English pounds plus VAT, a pump and a little bit of wire. Yess! I waited. It arrived. I informed the children. They did their best to sound interested.

Now, I am imagining a long distant ancestor of mine being transported forward through time to my house at around this moment. He will look at me in utter bewilderment. Here is a little glowing piece of that new-fangled glass stuff, with pictures on it of a red man and a big black and white box. You seem very absorbed with it, great great great great great niece Sarah. What occureth? Well it's a website dedicated entirely to inflatable Santas Cedric, it's wonderful. But, Sarah, what about the pig who is ailing? The crops which have failed and the sun which disappeared behind a dark disc and did not reappear for half an hour? Well never mind about all that my long distant uncle, what about this inflatable Santa for the lawn. I mean **THIS IS IMPORTANT. IT'S AN INFLATABLE SANTA AND IT'S GOING ON THE LAWN AND IT WILL LIGHT UP AND EVERYONE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE IT AND THINK WE ARE COOL.** Stop bothering me with your pigs and eclipses and so forth. Oh, you've gone.

Then I am imagining a far into the future descendent of mine, we shall call her AllegraAstra, because I just made that up and I like it, who pops back in her time machine to see what all the fuss is about. She is one of the five remaining humans. Hallo AllegraAstra, I say, do you like my inflatable Santa? What's that, she says. Why are you pumping the so-precious air into a piece of nylon? Oh, well, yes, sorry we accidentally turned the planet into ash but what about my Santa eh? Isn't it great? Oh – she's gone too. No staying power.

So, with the little bit of wire and the new pump and the uninterred Santa and his van in my hand, I crept out into the dark just before Christmas to inflate him and be the marvel of Grindleford.

What I had failed to notice was that a storm was whipping up. Santa's van started to buck like a young horse. Alarmed, I stopped inflating it, ran in and got tent pegs and the best I could do for string to anchor him down with. (Possibly the world's first VW to have an anchor). Alas that turned out to be elasticated cord and strimmer wire. I used the elasticated cord first, and then found out you can't tie strimmer wire onto a tent peg in the dark in a storm. By this time I was freezing and soaked, and my fingers had stopped working, but by golly! I wasn't going to give up. Not now. And then. Tragedy stuck. The elasticated cord stretched in a gust of wind to its full extent. The pump and the little bit of wire did not. The pump and the bit of wire parted company, the little lights went out and Santa started, inexorably, to deflate. The tyres went down.. Santa's chin sunk into his chest... his little waving hand drooped over and lay flat... down down and down he went.. until there was just a red white and black nylon puddle flapping about on the lawn.

That's the end of it. I hadn't the heart to lash out another £45 plus VAT, somehow my heart had gone out of it. Today, I put Santa's flat remains into another bin liner and put him out with the rubbish.

*Carpe diem et sequere somnia tua, Santa – seize the day and follow your dreams.*  
This is a true story (well, mostly true).

Sarah Battarbee

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## Useful Websites:

Grindleford Parish Council: [www.grindlefordparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.grindlefordparishcouncil.co.uk)

Grindleford Community Shop: [www.grindlefordvillageshop.co.uk](http://www.grindlefordvillageshop.co.uk)

Check out all the activities going on in our pre-school and primary school:

[www.grindlefordandeyamplaygroup.org.uk](http://www.grindlefordandeyamplaygroup.org.uk) and

[www.grindlefordprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.grindlefordprimaryschool.co.uk)

Finally, don't forget the village has its own website where you can find out about what is going on locally and post details of your own events:

[www.grindleford.com](http://www.grindleford.com)

If you are new to the village 'welcome' and we have a dedicated section with information: <http://www.grindleford.com/welcome-to-grindleford/>

## Any News?

If there's anything you feel should be covered in the next issue, please send an item to the editors at [grindlefordnews@gmail.com](mailto:grindlefordnews@gmail.com).

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A few further copies are also available from the editors and is also available to view on the Village webpages.