

Mill Bank & Cottonstones Newsletter Summer 2025



St Mary's School Celebrates its 175th Birthday

St Mary's school has celebrated its 175th year in style. The sun shone on an open day of outdoor festivities, including a medley of popular songs through the school's ages; the children danced the hokey-cokey and others performed a short reading about the lives of half-timers - children at the beginning of the 20th century who worked in the mill in the mornings, and attended school in the afternoon.

During the week, Fi and Janet organised heritage walks for the children, who took in all sorts of detail, and were particularly fascinated by the old outdoor toilets, how they were emptied, and of course the sweet shops that once existed.

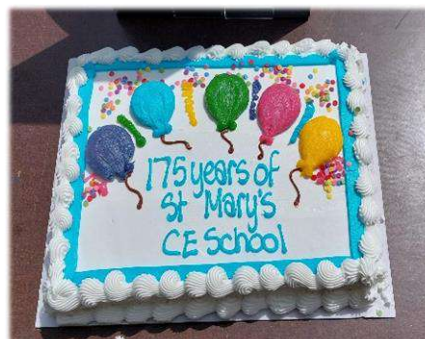
In the hall, Ruth interviewed Bernard and Richard Armitage, who were the last children to live on the premises with their Head Teacher father until 1952. Children of all ages listened attentively, and hands shot up with well-informed questions at the end.

Richard's mum was shocked into premature delivery of her son when the ominous sound of a doodlebug engine was heard overhead, before cutting out and exploding near Hubberton. Richard's mum said it was the only time he had ever been early, and Richard still has a piece of the shrapnel.

The school's kitchen garden has been beautifully restored and a ribbon was cut to re-open it, with the intention of a new gardening club for green-fingered pupils.

Inside there were fascinating details from the journals of earlier head teachers, including a note expressing relief that one had finally sourced a supply of cod liver oil, and another from 1934 noting the delivery of 724 eggs from the school's hens to the Royal Infirmary.

Ruth's exhibition of early photographs of Mill Bank and Cottonstones captured the imagination of the children. Meanwhile, Fiona, Linda and Irene carried on a brisk plant trade in the field, from cosmos to broccoli and sunflowers. raising a healthy fund.



Pupils served visitors with a special birthday cake.

This is **your** newsletter, so please do get in touch with information, photos, or news.

Newsletter: contact Michael- michaelbeazley40@gmail.com / 07756 822995 **Website:** <https://www.millbankvillage.co.uk/> Mill Bank Chat **WhatsApp:** ask Phillippa or Bronwen to join: See **561/562** WhatsApp group for bus chat. **Email Newsletter:** On the website, enter your email address to receive the newsletter, as a longer edition. **Facebook:** search for the Mill Bank Group

Looking After the Village

Spring has brought a flurry of action to look after the public spaces, and to revive important aspects of life in the village. Communications are vastly improved and so many people have stepped up to help make the village an even better place to live. So there's quite a crowd to thank. Here goes:

Firstly, Fiona and Gail for their drive to organise everyone's efforts, bringing people together and grappling with our bureaucracies to resolve some tricky issues; and to the other Mill Bank Group members who have brought energy and new ideas with goodwill.

Sue and John for their tireless commitment to keep the village free of litter; Derek for the heavy work of clearing weeds from footpaths; Bruce, Claire, Fi and Dave, Ellie, Sarah and India for the community garden tidy up, including the recycling of chips from the felled ash trees to renew the path in the community garden. It's looking great!

Claire and Ellie for beautifying the community centre at St Mary's Church with some artistic flair; Cllr Leah Webster for all her work behind the scenes to replace the playground equipment, re-instate the gritting service and the village bins.

Ruth and the History Group members for digging out our village past, and especially for bringing it all to life with children and parents at the school for their anniversary.

David for our handsome village website, which is home to so many interesting old photos, stories and documents, and much else.

Bronwen for setting up the Neighbour Watch scheme, and other members who have kept a careful eye on anti-social behaviour and kept us informed.

There's plenty still to do this year. Fiona is working to link us with the Cleaner, Greener service to secure more help from the council team to keep the weeds down on the pavements and dispose of them.

The MBG will plug away with campaigns to speed up the re-opening of roads after road repairs, upgrading the water mains, and building better working arrangements with council services.

The next village tidy up will be 21st-27th June. Details to follow on WhatsApp.

What's On?

Don't miss the next quiz night! It's on 20th June at the Community Centre, Mary's Church. Refreshments available.



Claire Murray's exhibition of her paintings at Dean Clough is still open until the 9th June, so this is the last chance to visit.



The Mill Bank Group will be holding its Annual General Meeting on 13 November 7th, 7.30 at Cottonstones Community Centre. There will be a quiz, and refreshments will be provided.

Spring on WhatsApp

Let's kick off the Spring round-up with some of the interesting items for sale or give-away this season. Nicola's edible inks were an intriguing start. Who knew they went in cocktails? Also on offer was her unusual combination of sandpaper and orchid food, for those days when you need to prep your orchids before repainting. But top prize goes to her flamboyant tea-cosy (see below), in excellent condition, and only worn a few times after a few of the cocktails that probably contained her edible ink.

Claire's Aga was on offer too, but you'd need some skills to put it together from the box of bits. If flummoxed putting it together, you could have bought some brushes for horse grooming instead.

To the other beasts of the village: the toads that lived after crossing the road have been partying in the mill pond. No-one could shift the peacock that entertained us from the rooftops with its drunken roaring at 4am whilst devouring nearby gardens. More worrying was the report of a large black dog haunting Fiddle Wood in the twilight, but there were no witches in sight, just a few dead geese.

Three smart sheep snapped at Ivy Houses gate broke out to avoid their future in a mutton pie. But first wildlife prize of the season goes to Hayley for finding a European cock-chaffer (a beetle apparently) in her bath, though she didn't say if it had come with a visa to remain.

Sasha swam 10k for cancer research and is still finding her way home, whilst Paul ran the London Marathon for the National Autistic Society. What a lovely lot you are.



Nicola's prize winning tea cosy, with hat option for a day at the races.

Get Down Shep!

Dr Chris Hewison (MRCVS) wants to gauge interest in starting puppy training in our area. He can use local land for this during the summer and might approach the Cottonstones Community Centre for use of the community space at other times.

Chris already runs classes in Hebden Bridge. If you're interested, please **contact him directly at chris@dontstopretrievin.co.uk or via facebook.com/dontstopretrievin**

Language for Fun Courses in a Day

Nine weeks of the Beginners 1 course, condensed into a single day! This course will run through all the vocabulary and grammar points that you need for a good foundation to learning French or Spanish.

All printed material will be provided with access to our online learning area to enable you to practise and review what you have learned. Lunch will be provided.

Although this one-day course is intense, it is an effective "springboard" to your language learning journey. This is particularly useful if you are unable to commit to a regular weekly class, but anyone is welcome. You may also find it useful as a "crammer" before going on holiday or to a French or Spanish speaking country for work.

For more information about this or the weekly classes, please contact Ellie on 07868 279513 or ellie@languageforfun.uk.

St Mary's School News

The Owl Hunt will now take place on Saturday 28th June. The owls will be themed, and everyone is welcome. Contact Sarah Pittock to enter or sponsor an owl.

PTFA and village volunteers have made a beautiful job of rebuilding the school's kitchen garden where tender shoots are now shooting up from the new beds.

The History Group

Mill Bank and Cottonstones Heritage Project

Over the past two years The History Group has been conducting interviews and developing the village website. Five heritage walks have taken place and Ruth Beazley has been working on a collection of stories which will be published in September.

'Mill Bank and Cottonstones. Stories from the 20th Century' will be launched on Sunday 14 September 2 pm at St Mary's School and there will be a repeat of the popular heritage walk through the villages on the same day.

The History Group thanks Calderdale Council Culturedale and National Heritage Lottery funds for a grant which will help to develop the website further.

If you would like to book a place on the walk, please contact Ruth (rhbeazley@gmail.com or 07753748482) Tea and cake will be served at the school. The books will cost £12 and will be available from Ruth from 1 September.

Neighbourhood Watch

A big thank you to Bronwen for setting up our Neighbourhood Watch scheme as she steps back, and a warm welcome to Fran and Tan who will be picking up the reins. All their efforts to improve our safety and security are greatly appreciated.

Two of the scallies (or insert your preferred term) thought to be involved in the spate of recent thefts around the village were captured in the night by door-bell cameras. The police are investigating but have not responded to enquiries about progress. No-one will need reminding about the need to lock up carefully and to consider the deterrent value of security devices.

Speeding vehicles through the village have been a recent hot topic. Cllr Webster advised that we should request speed testing with community officers to gather data and build a case for resources. She suggests that a Mill Bank road safety group should be created, which can ask the warden and police to support with meetings. Anyone interested?

Mind and Body

Keep Fit with Julia at the community Centre, St Mary's Church is to continue on Wednesday evenings 7.00pm. No need to book - just turn up with a mat for floor work. Great music too. Phone 823589 for more information. £5 per session.

Claire at *Bien Être* is a qualified massage therapist and well-being coach specializing in chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and menopause. She works from her therapy room in Sowerby Bridge. Text to 07971595648 for appointments, either for relaxing treatments or deeper treatment for pain or an injury, or if you would like a free coaching consultation.

Eden has opened a new beauty salon at E Mill in Dean Clough and is offering nail, brow and lash treatments. She's open Tuesday-Saturday.
Social media - @ea_beauty02
Contact - 07597326240

Hearth and Home

If you're suffering from flat-pack furniture rage, running out of time for interior painting, cleaning or minor household repairs, Freya could be the person you need. She can also help you find building tradespeople for larger jobs.

Freya is an ex-Mill Bank pupil so she must be good. She's available after work and weekends.
Contact her on 07484 814003 or at Freya@ready2movein.co.uk

Baked delights are now available from Liz White, who is setting up a new bakes and cake-making business on the hill top. Contact her on 07925 567790.

The Mill Bank Group Committee 2025

Gail Parker (Chair), Fiona Peach (Secretary 07962 474914), Linda Wilson (Treasurer, 0734 1443989), David Bagley, Michael Beazley (077568 22995), Ellie Fitzgerald, Sarah Pittock, Peter Hardy (07531 806279), Keith Kemp (01422 823687), Glynis Lord, Bronwen Pendleton (christopher174@sky.com), Phillippa Walton, Fi Godfrey-Faussett.

Cottonstones Community Centre and St Mary's Church

A consultation about the future of the church and community centre has begun, in the light of dwindling attendance and use. A questionnaire about the future of the church and community centre is enclosed with this newsletter and will also be available in digital form on WhatsApp.

If completing this on paper, please find a few minutes to fill in your answers, and return it either to The Old Co-op on Grand View, Mill Bank Road, or to 53 Lower Mill Bank Road.

If you are reading this newsletter electronically and would like to contribute to the consultation, please message Fiona for a link to the online version.

A short-term church and community centre group has been set up alongside the consultation process, to take action to support and revive the community centre. It has been sifting through suggestions for future use, understanding the running costs and other practical considerations.

The key actions in the short term are to help ensure that we all understand what is at stake if closure becomes likely, and to generate interest in making more use of the centre.

The first Quiz Night was a great start, attracting over 40 people and raising £162 for the Community Centre funds.

The next Quiz is on 20th June at 7.30pm and will be compered by legendary quizmaster Keith Kemp.

Book Group

In April, the book group read *Kamchatka* by Marcelo Figueres, set in Argentina during the coup d'etat of 1976. The novel tells the story of a young boy trying to make sense of his world during the upheaval.

The group was impressed with the book's insight into the mind of Harry, whose ten-year-old life is turned upside down – his parents lose their jobs, the family are forced to hide in move to safe houses, the children have to change school, lose their friends and have to change their names. Harry doesn't understand why but is sworn to secrecy. Strongly recommended.

New members are always welcome. We meet every month on the last Thursday. **Contact John 01422 823589**

Bus Woes - Computer Says No

The saga continues. Who'd have guessed it was so difficult to arrange communications between utilities, contractors, the Council and Team Pennine when it comes to closing and re-opening the roads after repairs? The Mill Bank Group is doing its fighting best, and our MP Josh Fenton-Glyn has met with Yorkshire Water's CEO to emphasise the need for improvements. Here's the latest:

561/562 bus users were inconvenienced again in May when road work permits requested by Northern Powergrid closed Cross Wells Road and Causeway Head Road. No works were actually carried out on Cross Wells Road before 28 April, but because the road work permit was listed as 'in force', Team Pennine suspended the service. Our chair, Gail, and Secretary Fiona, along with other bus users repeatedly contacted Streetworks at the Council and the contractors, in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to get the buses running.

Gail wrote to the relevant Council Director to highlight the consequences of the 11-day suspension, particularly as the service could have run as usual for the first six days. Her letter enclosed half a dozen first-hand accounts on the negative impact it had brought on their day-to-day lives.

The response from the Director came just as we have gone to press. She understands the issues that closures like this cause, and says the Council regularly remind utilities about the importance of planning works correctly or in emergency situations, prioritise works to reinstate the roads quickly. She added that Team Pennine who run the bus service, rely on the information shown on "one.network" to assess whether routes are accessible or not, and in this case the permit showed the road was closed until 2 May. Finally, we are reassured that the Council does understand the importance of these bus routes and will continue to remind people of the importance of keeping rural bus routes open.

Mill Bank Group will continue to stress the importance of the 561/562 bus service to our rural village and work to ensure services run as regularly as possible.

If you would like to join the 561/562 bus chat WhatsApp please message David Akroyd or Fiona and they will add you to it.

Carl Fradgley 1969-2025



We are very sad to report the death of Carl on 11th March. Many of us will remember him especially for delivering our milk, year-round, and in all weathers. He had a smile to cheer up the coldest winter day. Warm tributes were paid to Carl at a celebration of his life on 9th April. Carl's friend

Katie Higgins presented this special cushion to Lois and David, to whom we send our condolences for their untimely loss.

Wildlife Corner

Should you bump into a swarm of bees in the village, you can contact Paddy on WhatsApp or 07802 2466311 for advice. And later for his excellent honey.

It's been a good year for staying alive if you're a toad, frog or newt. The season has now ended, and thanks go to all the toad patrollers who turned out to help, both this year and in the past; especially the younger patrollers whose sharp eyes are brilliant at spotting tiny toads. The numbers tell the story; 1316 toads saved, 87 live frogs and 2 live newts. This has been the best year yet since 2018. Look out still for toads in July, do the decent thing to help them into the undergrowth, and post your results on WhatsApp. News of more Toad Patrolling next January.



...and finally, to the peacock who displayed his finest feathers from the rooftops in search of a mate this spring, snacking on the best garden flowers, and shrieking down the chimneys at dawn, just in case anyone was still asleep. Bless!

From Councillor Leah Webster

We have a way to go in restoring so many of our public services, nationally and locally, so it's great to know that communities like Mill Bank are so active as partners in looking after the village and public spaces. I am continuing to do my best to make the right connections with local agencies, using my role to support local improvements.

So I was very happy to see the completion of the playground repairs and replacements on the playing field, and the restoration of waste bins. It looks as if the new zip wire is already well-used!

I fully support the celebration of St Mary's 175th year as our oldest primary school and was impressed to see how the school has partnered with the Mill Bank Group to help children explore local history.

I'm planning to hold one of my regular Councillor's surgeries in Mill Bank soon, probably at the Cottonstones Community Centre, St Mary's Church. So, if you have an issue about council services that I can help with, please get in touch with me or come along when the date and place are announced.

It's a privilege to have been elected at full council as the new chair of the Children and Young People's scrutiny board. Some of you will know of my long interest and work to improve services and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities, and this will continue to be a priority in my new role.

St Mary's Church- New Service Times

New service times are being introduced **from 1st July**. These will now be held at 10am on the first Sunday of the month with cake and coffee to follow.



The next newsletter will be published in September.