



SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB

**NEWSLETTER No. 62
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**SALTS MILL, SALTAIRE 1997
by DAVID HOCKNEY**

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Dear Members and Friends

Welcome to the September Newsletter and the start of a new SUWC year. You will find reviews of recent events which we hope you have enjoyed as well as previews of what you can expect in the coming months. A provisional programme of future events is attached, so please make a note of the dates in your diaries. There is a wide variety of events and talks including a Christmas event and summer visit to Newby Hall. You will not be asked to complete an online booking form for the talks at Tapton Hall. Booking forms will only be used for events which have a limit on numbers or where payment is required.

This edition of the newsletter will be sent by email to all members and in print form to those who need a hard copy. Members needing hard copies are asked to collect them at meetings, wherever possible, to save on postage.

A reminder that if you haven't already renewed your subscription, please do so as soon as possible.

Several key members of the committee have served their term and are stepping down. They will need to be replaced. We shall be very sorry to lose Jacinta Campbell as our wonderful Chair after three years which have included keeping things running smoothly during the Covid pandemic. Belinda Barber and Brenda Zinober, our Treasurer, will also be leaving the committee after several years of valuable input. We need members to bring new ideas and skills, so please make yourself known to a committee member if you are interested in joining us and we can tell you what is involved.

We hope you enjoy the programme planned for you. Do let us know if you have ideas for future events.

RECENT EVENTS IN 2023

17 January: Talk and demonstration by Ron and Liz Jarman – Taiji, its History, Practice and Benefits

The Chinese meaning of Taiji is supreme ultimate boxing. It is a martial art, but not an ancient one and nowadays is mainly practised for its health benefits.

The art of Taiji came into being in China in the 1700s as evidenced in Chinese writings. There are various styles, but the one most widely practised is the Yang style which is the one Ron and Liz practise and which they demonstrated to us with music. It is primarily a sequence of very slow arm and leg movements. The effect is balletic and elegant and shows a system of symbolic fighting movements. The process is done slowly to ensure correctness of movement and to induce a relaxed, meditative, highly focused state. The health benefits are numerous as is proven by research. These include a healthier heart rate, better leg and ankle strength, co-ordination and balance. Taiji is also beneficial for stroke victims, for maintaining good blood pressure and for those who suffer from osteoarthritis. It is also claimed to be good for maintaining good brain plasticity.

After being invited to participate in a short exercise of Taiji, we were shown a video of a young Chinese woman demonstrating the art. She was highly proficient and athletic and her movements were a joy to see!

Finally, Ron and Liz emphasized that Taiji cannot be taught by just anyone, but teachers have to be well trained and certificated. This was a talk and demonstration well worth the experience and members who attended appeared very well pleased with the afternoon.

23 February: Talk by Peter Miles - L du Garde Peach and the Great Hucklow Players

This was a fascinating talk given by Peter Miles, who lives in Great Hucklow and had acted at the theatre. Certain people have the drive and single-mindedness to create and run a successful venture, to make things happen, at times against all odds, and Dr. Laurence du Garde Peach was just such a person. The son of the Reverend Charles Peach, a Unitarian Minister in Great Hucklow, Derbyshire, L du Garde Peach formed in 1927 an amateur theatre group, The Great Hucklow Players, which existed successfully for 40 years. They performed initially from 1927 until 1938 in the Unitarian Holiday Home in the village, founded by his father and a colleague for underprivileged children from Sheffield and Manchester. When the new minister refused them the use of the Home, Laurence negotiated for the Group to move to an old lead mining barn nearby and organized working parties from the village (of 90 people) to convert it into the new Playhouse. It had 250 seats (bought from no longer needed seats at Sheffield's Montgomery Theatre), a fully functioning stage, workshops, dressing rooms and a car park.

A wide range of plays was staged, including Shakespeare, classics and contemporary, and plays written by Laurence himself. Plays ran for three weeks and there was a demanding rehearsal schedule. Laurence cast and directed all plays, and acted in many, and his was the only name to appear in the programme. There were no posters to advertise the productions, just word of mouth. Laurence was stung by a comment in a local newspaper to the effect that all the plays staged seemed to have been written by Laurence himself, so he included a programme note to show that this was not the case.

The actors and staff all came from the local area. The standard of the Players was very high attracting audiences from near and far. Laurence's wife was the prompt, and had a habit of falling asleep, waking up and not immediately knowing whereabouts in the play they were. One actor, waiting in the wings, was urged onto the stage

by the prompt, arrived centre stage, looked agitatedly at the prompt and said “I don’t come on for three pages!”

We were shown stills from various plays and the sets and costumes, created by the local villagers looked extremely impressive and professional. The maxim of “the play must go on” certainly applied here - actresses in full costume coming from their nearby dressing room queuing outside the stage door in heavy snow; in a power cut using car headlights and oil lamps to light up the production.



L du Garde Peach was a man of many parts. Aside from writing plays, founding The Great Hucklow Players and running the Playhouse, he produced a newsletter, sent a personal crit. to each actor after productions, was the first author in the Ladybird book series, stood as a Liberal candidate for Derby and apparently had been an intelligence officer in Germany.

His epitaph to the Playhouse when in 1971 he decided after 40 years to call it a day was, in the words of Prospero - “Our revels now are ended.....”

14th March: Talk by Pam Enderby – Men Speak, Women Communicate - a non-evidence-based comparison

With a background in speech therapy and interest in communication styles and differences, Pam Enderby gave us a very entertaining and informative talk about gender differences in speaking and communicating. These may be neurophysiological, environmental or nurturing. Differences between genders relate not just to speech, but to hearing and understanding also. They start at a young age and continue through life.

Communication is not just speaking - and Pam stressed that communication is the way we interact and generally the different genders interact differently.

Even from a young age differences can be seen. Boys have bigger rib cages leading to them having louder voices; girls, even when very young, have more parts of the brain engaged in communication which helps them to develop broader comprehension more quickly. Development of language helps brains to develop and vice versa. A failure to understand the context of words can lead to someone feeling threatened. Youngsters with behavioural problems who are in trouble often have language problems (restricted vocabularies) and need to be helped to understand that they are not in a threatening situation. It is also important that patients with mental health issues do not see others as a threat because of difficulties they may have in understanding context.

Women will more frequently engage in a conversation on any topic, but men engage mainly in a subject in which they are particularly interested. Items put on an agenda at formal meetings and picked up for discussion for a longer time have usually been put there by men. Men speak for longer about factual content (what? and how?) and women's conversations more frequently relate to ambience, using more words and tending to relate to where? and why? They tend to use more adjectives and non-specific terms. Non-verbal communication also differs between genders. Women sense what is happening and use their senses (...hearing the tone of voice, monitoring behaviours, facial expression etc.) to communicate. In addition to differences in types of vocabulary, there are differences in physical expression, for example the use of hands. Eye contact can be more difficult for men who can see it as confrontational. Women can often assess a man's mood by the way in which he says something rather than the words that he is using. Men, more frequently, do not want to demonstrate weakness. It is speculated that this is one of the reasons that leads to a higher male suicide rate.

Medical training needs to take account of these issues including the fact that female doctors tend to engage in longer consultations with patients exploring contextual issues and are more likely to use touch to communicate with patients.

In childhood, boys generally talk less than girls. In middle age, men and women generally talk the same amount, but as we age, communication skills change as part of the normal ageing process with more difficulty finding words. Men often find it more difficult because of a tendency to forget factual words which they favour. This may result in men growing quieter whilst women frequently grow more garrulous. These changes are relevant to old age psychiatry as more women feel lonely in old age.

Pam concluded her talk by saying that neither men nor women are better communicators; they communicate differently.

24th April: Demonstration of Willow Basket Weaving by Rachel Hutton and Lunch



On a lovely sunny morning nearly 30 of us gathered at the Whiteley Woods Outdoor Activity Centre with a mixture of excitement and a little apprehension as to whether we had the skills to become basket weavers. Ann Evans introduced the morning with a short history of the Outdoor Centre owned by Girl Guiding Sheffield since the 1930s. The overall responsibility for running these Grade II Listed buildings

and grounds sits with a group of volunteers, but now with the help of a centre manager/caretaker and other specialised paid members of staff. It provides residential facilities and a wide range of activities for many young people.

Ann introduced Rachel Hutton. In a former life Rachel was a head teacher, but is now one of seven Woodland Park Rangers for Sheffield City Council, where she describes her life as “a jack of all trades”. When Rachel went on her first willow weaving course in Somerset her tutor described her as a natural weaver. She had no idea then that there was a family tradition of willow weaving. Only later did her mother tell her that her grandfather wove willow coffins and that as a baby, if she was fractious, she was put in front of her grandfather to watch him weave. Rachel, now a member of The Worshipful Company of Basket Makers, is currently working with the Imperial War Museum on a project investigating the role of the women who coppiced the willow and made baskets, in a similar way to which the land girls worked on the farms in WW11. The baskets were used for gathering fruit, storing ammunitions and measuring all kinds of commodities as each basket contained a bushel.

Rachel told us how willow grows and how it is coppiced, a practice of woodland management dating back many centuries. She mainly uses willow coppiced from the two major plantations near Sheffield.

Rachel’s first demonstration was how to make a cloud tree from living willow which has been kept in water since being coppiced. The stems are stuck into a pot of soil and woven into a freeform shape, which will sprout and become a living sculpture. Then it was our turn! Rachel explained that we had to “love” our willow, which meant gently massaging it so that it would bend into a gentle curve and not kink, which would kill it. A lot of willow loving ensued and then we had to twist and bend our four lengths of willow into a heart shape and secure them with ties. Some people got it straight off, while others had to replace lengths that had got kinked. Eventually

most of us had, at least a passable willow heart to take home and put in a pot to flourish over the summer.

We then moved on to using dead willow, which had been soaked for a week and mellowed for a day. The aim was to make a willow Christmas tree. This willow was a little easier to handle and we all produced lovely little trees which we topped with a woven star.

The morning finished with Rachel weaving the top edge of a basket. The mnemonic for the weave was based on five men picking up five women, marrying them and finally divorcing them! It was wonderful to see a true craftswoman at work and the basket was beautiful.

Afterwards we adjourned for a delicious lunch provided by Ann and the volunteers from the Outdoor Centre and, of course, lots more chatter. We left clutching our willow creations after a most enjoyable day. Rachel kindly donated her fee to the Activity Centre.

24 May: Talk by Judy Simons – The Northern Line – the History of a Sheffield Jewish Family

They say that every picture tells a story and that was certainly the case in photos that Judy used to illustrate her fascinating talk about her search into her family history and the resulting book. She'd wanted her grandchildren to understand their heritage and with the aid of boxes of photos and papers left by her mother, she unlocked what she feels is a lost part of Sheffield's history.

The first photo was of her great-grand mother, Rachel, who lived and died in Jagielnica, a village in the Eastern Galicia region of the Ukraine, where Russian rule was making life for Jews intolerable. In 1899, aged 12, her daughter, Leah, went to



Manchester where her father and elder sister were already living in a Jewish community of around 30,000. Like many other young girls, she and her sister, Ada, were employed in the many garment factories and a photo showed them as fashionably dressed young women. Ada married her boss, but sadly he had an affair with his secretary and eventually they divorced, leaving a photo of Ada, with her errant husband torn off.

Her grandmother, Leah, married her step brother, Isaac, and in 1911 the couple moved to Sheffield where Isaac set up a finance office. They had five children, including Judy's mother, Ena. At that time Sheffield had a relatively small Jewish community, around 800 people, centred around Paradise Square, with their own shops and school or *cheder*.

Judy's father, David, is pictured in a photo, aged ten, wearing clothes too big for him and a paper collar. After being tragically orphaned at the age of six, he arrived in Sheffield in 1915 on a troop train from Barrow-in-Furness to live with his grandparents in a crowded house in Broomhall. In spite of these inauspicious beginnings, he went on to excel at the *cheder* and at secondary school, graduated from Sheffield University and had a successful career at a city cutlery firm. Like David, many of the members of Jewish families who came to Sheffield from the early 1900s onwards with very little, went on to set up thriving businesses and make a significant contribution to the city which, thanks to Judy's researches, is now well documented.

13 June: Garden Party at the home of Shelagh and Geoff Marston

On a beautiful, but steaming hot, afternoon Women's Club members



found welcome shade in Shelagh and Geoff Marston's most interesting garden.

Created by them from old woodland dating from the 17th century on a steep slope, it is a mixture of careful planting, with a lovely arbour and fragrant shrubs and other more relaxed areas. It leads down to a 300 year old

stone wall and then to Oak Brook stream which emerges from a culvert and flows into the River Porter at Endcliffe Park. The old wall divided the estates of two Sheffield industrialists – John Brown of Endcliffe Hall and Mark Firth of Oakbrook Hall. In the woodland Shelagh and Geoff have planted hundreds of anemone nemorosa and a wildflower bank of red campion and ox-eye daisies.

As usual, the cakes were delicious and we sat under sunshades and trees and chatted while at the edge of the lawn a guitarist quietly strummed. What a lovely afternoon! Members generously contributed £193 to Shelagh's chosen charity, 'Lost Chord' and Sheila made this sum up to £200.



13 July: Summer Outing to Saltaire including a Guided Tour of the Village founded by Victorian Mill Owner Titus Salt



This summer's coach trip to Bradford to visit the Victorian village of Saltaire and the woollen mill built by Sir Titus Salt was hugely successful; a golden opportunity to explore this iconic historical site and to revel in the glorious paintings of David Hockney exhibited there. The visit began at the café Don't Tell Titus, and refreshed, the tour group was delightfully entertained in the grand Italianate surrounds of the Saltaire United Reformed Church with a brilliantly researched and professionally delivered introduction to Sir Titus Salt and his grandiloquent plans for making money and confirming his legacy as a great 19th Century entrepreneur.

Maria, our guide, (ably abetted by the posh Mrs Toothill) brought the history of the site to life with an engaging, entertaining, lively description of the harsh realities of the life of a typical Saltaire worker, indignantly and suitably sceptical about Salt's supposed philanthropic altruism. Sir Titus, ever the opportunist profiteer, benefitting from his friendship with Prince Albert, built his manufacturing empire on the discovery of a fine, silky worsted yarn, enticing workers to his rural site from the filthy slum streets of stinking Bradford nearby. But Saltaire, built from 1851 on the 49

acres purchased, was no Utopia, and the workers were poorly paid and closely controlled by their domineering, forceful employer. The 850 mostly overcrowded houses (no pubs, pawnshops, but a village hall, Sunday School and hospital) were carefully built in a grid to be easily supervised by managers from their bigger houses further up the hill, and designed to reflect the increasing glory of the great Sir Titus, his face and coat of arms (unofficial at first) were everywhere a dominant architectural feature, and glorious Italianate buildings served mainly to enhance Salt's grandiose ambitions. Cleanliness, godliness and elementary education were the lot for the submissive and supposedly grateful workforce.

Sadly, for the Salt legacy that is, the eldest son George did little to sustain his mills after Sir Titus' death in 1876, and Saltaire was rescued after decline by James Roberts who supplied the new RAF with their grey uniforms after 1917.

The mill closed in 1980 and was revived in 1986 as an art space by Jonathan Silver, friend to David Hockney, and it was with this rich artistic legacy that our visit was preoccupied in the afternoon in the Salt's Mill galleries. A very informative introduction to the varied artistic skills of David Hockney from his first childhood experiments to adventurous designs with modern technology using fax machines and iPads stimulated our further investigations around the Hockney galleries.

Altogether the day provided many opportunities for varied forms of enjoyment, investigating art, architecture, history, (and shopping!) and members could explore the site freely with a boat on the canal, or by watching a finely detailed video at the mill. And excellent weather as well! This was a most successful visit.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - at 2.15 p.m. at Tapton Masonic Hall unless otherwise stated:

Monday, 25th September 2023: 10.00am - noon Coffee Morning and Book Exchange

Join us as we get together for the start of our new season. Bring along the books you have read over the summer and acquire some new autumn reading. A box for donations will be provided.

Wednesday, 18th October 2023: AGM and Talk

Coffee and cakes will be served from 2.00pm and the AGM will be followed by a Talk ‘Is that a big number?’ by Professor Mike Campbell.

Mike, formerly Professor of Medical Statistics in the School of Health and Related Research, is Emeritus Professor of Medical Statistics at the University of Sheffield. He has served on numerous Government committees including The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Cabinet Office Public Health Advisory Board. His mission is to teach people to be able to critique numbers, but not be totally cynical and believe nothing.

We are bombarded by numbers. For example, the Government recently stated they had increased the number of police officers by 21,000 since 2019. Is that a lot? It sounds good, but it perhaps helps to know there was a decrease of 22,000 full time police officers in the UK from 2010 to 2019! So from 2010 there has been a decrease. Ask a statistician ‘How are you?’ and they will reply ‘Compared with whom?’ Mike will explain how a statistician views attempts by any party to browbeat the public with big numbers in an attempt to convince the public that the party has done well.

Thursday, 16th November 2023: Talk by Patrick Dickinson – ‘The River Sheaf and its Journey to the Station’

Join Patrick on a journey under the streets of Sheffield following the River Sheaf through Victorian storm drains c1870 to the mighty cathedral chamber known as Megatron. It is quite unbelievable what is down there and by using a photographic technique known as "light painting" he hopes to reveal this awesome Victorian engineering wonder in all its glory.

Thursday, 7th December 2023 Christmas Event: Talk by Professor Clyde Binfield – ‘Pastiches for Purists’ - at the Hallamshire Golf Club, Redmires Road, followed by a Christmas lunch. Details of timings, menus and cost will all be issued later

This promises to be an excellent occasion with good food and a fascinating talk from Professor Clyde Binfield who some of you may already know. Clyde taught for many years in the History Department at Sheffield University.

Thursday, 18th January 2024: Talk by Rose and Alex Krzyz - ‘Our Travels in Pictures’

Alex and Rose had an insatiable travel bug, until COVID knocked it on the head. In this talk they attempt to show how their photographs rekindle the joy of travel and talk about the different ways these photographic memories can be preserved.

Alex is a Londoner, son of Polish refugees displaced during the Second World War. Rose, born and educated in Malta, only moved to London after marrying Alex. They are both retired Science teachers who used to teach in London secondary schools. They moved to Sheffield, once retired, having had many visits to the place. These visits soon dispelled their London-centric vision of Sheffield and they have, so far, spent 12 happy post retirement years here.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Walking Groups:

The Walking Group

The walking group meets on the first Tuesday of every month, Members take it in turns to lead a walk of about 4/5 miles or 2/3 hours (not a fast pace). We sometimes have lunch together after the walk. Visitors and new members are always welcome. Details are sent out a few days in advance so just ask to join our emailing list.

Short Walking Group

This group meets at 10.00 am opposite 26 Riverdale Road on the first Tuesday in the month for a short walk through Endcliffe Park to a local coffee shop. New members would be very welcome.

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