

# A SOCIAL AND COMMERCIAL HISTORY OF SHIPLEY GLEN

This book charts the history and development of Shipley Glen as a popular Bank Holiday destination visited by hundreds of thousands of Bradford and West Yorkshire workers and their families in the Victorian and early Edwardian periods.

The author Alan Cattell has carried out extensive research and in doing so has woven together various strands of the Glen's history from its early days of Sunday School/ Temperance visits, through a range of themes including ownership of the Glen, catering establishments, farms and farmhouse teas, the **Saltaire Exhibition** and the rise and demise of **Fairs** and permanent **rides** on the **Glen plateau**. The text also includes details of the early development of the Shipley Glen Pleasure Grounds and Japanese Gardens on Prod Lane.

Although none of the previous attractions, apart from the Shipley Glen Tramway still exist, note is also taken of the current businesses and voluntary bodies remaining on the Glen.

In reading the book also use the Chronological Timeline to trace key events in the development of Shipley Glen.

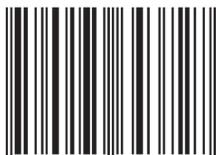
In their Foreword to the book Baildon Local Historians **Mike Lawson - Convenor of the Baildon History Society** and **Tish Lawson - Trustee of the Glen Tramway Preservation Company Ltd** comment:

*"In our opinion the book is very well written and researched and will become the "go to" book for anyone interested in the history of Shipley Glen."*

In her Foreword to the book, **Sallie Eastell** who was **born on the Glen** notes:

*"I would like to thank Alan Cattell for relighting my memories of the Glen and keeping them alive by firstly, writing this book and also by asking me to write a Foreword. I hope that in reading the book you too will feel some of the magic of the Glen and its history."*

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SHIPLEY GLEN - THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A VICTORIAN PLAYGROUND

ALAN CATTELL

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## THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A VICTORIAN PLAYGROUND



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# FOREWORD

ShIPLEY Glen has been a popular destination for the people of Bradford for more than 150 years.

## **Previous Publications**

The earliest published account can be found in William Cudworth's Round about Bradford published in 1868. This describes the Glen as '*a famous resort in the spring and summer months, and it is as much an 'institution' of Bradford life as Greenwich is of metropolitan*'.

Little more was written until Stanley Varo published *A Shipley Glen Ramble* in 1984. At that time, many people had memories of school and Sunday school trips to the Glen, and their parents had more vivid memories of the various attractions which had some years earlier been demolished. The excellent map in this book has been the basis of many local history walks, including our own.

This volume and the publication *100 Years at Shipley Glen - The Story of the Glen Tramway* (Mick Leak - 2003 plus later additions) have until now been the 'go to' books for anyone wishing to find out about the history of Shipley Glen.

## **This Book**

In this new publication Alan Cattell (who has previously published books and articles which cover various aspects of the history of the Glen) has built on the topics covered in these previous works and added new material. Through extensive research - (particularly using contemporary newspaper articles) he charts the social and commercial changes which influenced the popularity of this area.

In doing so he has woven together the various strands of the Glen's history from its early days to the present, covering themes ranging from ownership of the Glen, farms and farmhouse teas, to the Saltaire Exhibition and the rise and demise of Fairs and permanent rides on the Glen plateau.

# COMMON LAND, BANK HOLIDAYS, MOORLAND RAMBLES AND FAIRS 1870 - 1880

With growing numbers now visiting the Glen, two pieces of legislation were to have an effect on the rights of those doing so. Both were intended to improve regular access to land which could provide public health benefits and relaxation in providing a breathing “lung” away from polluted manufacturing towns and cities.

## **Common Land Legislation**

In 1865 The Commons Preservation Society (now the Open Spaces Society) was founded as a pressure group to help protect Common Land for the people. In 1870 a Bill for the Protection of Suburban Commons was brought to the House of Commons by MP, W. F. Cowper. The Bill sought to *“Exempt from enclosure, commons within five miles of a city or town of 5,000 inhabitants or within ten miles of a city or town of 30,000 inhabitants.”*

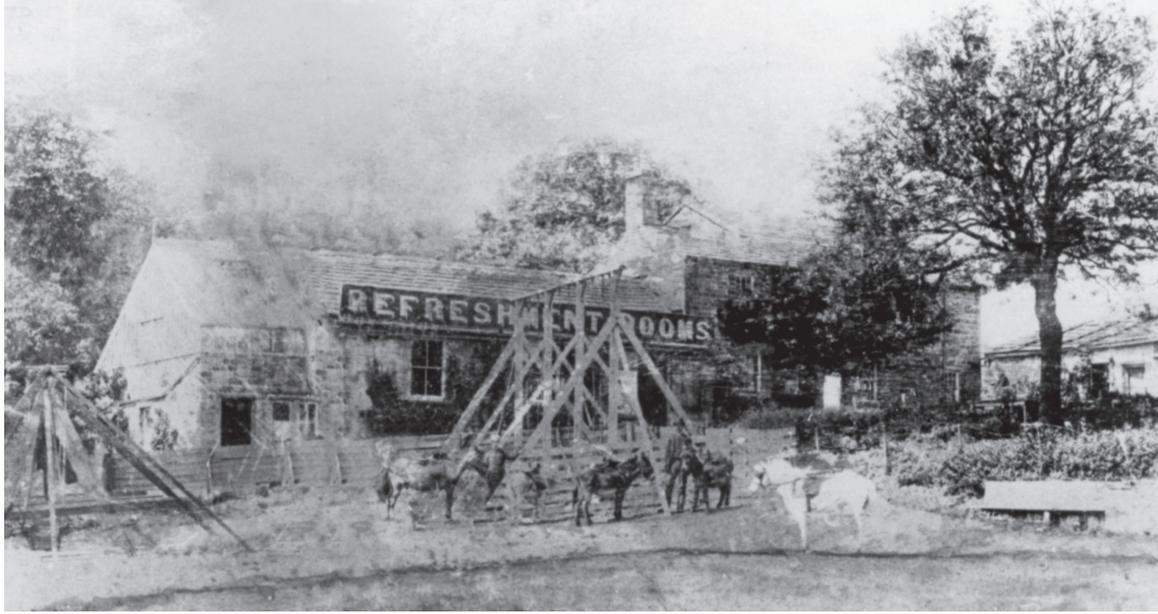
The Bradford Observer of 5th January, 1870 reported:

*“The Bill for the Protection of Suburban Commons is of concern to **large towns** especially in **manufacturing districts** and of most concern to **working people** and poorer classes.”*

It would however take a further five years until **Queen Victoria** would announce to Parliament:

*“My assent to the Bill for The Regulation and Improvement of Commons (**The Commons Act 1876**) and making amendments to Inclosure Acts to tend to the **preservation of open spaces** in the **neighbourhood of large towns** and to increase the **health** and comfort of my people.”*

Subsequent legislation has sought to provide greater clarity to what is a very complex area. It is not the intention of this book to expand on or debate this topic, merely to highlight the existence of early legislation.



*Courtesy of Bingley and District Local History Society.*

## TEMPERANCE HOTELS - CHANGES ON THE GLEN 1881 - 1886

### **Old Glen House**

Contrary to previous published research regarding John Pickles Dewhirst taking over the Old Glen House on the retirement of Charles Clegg in 1875... the following was the case:

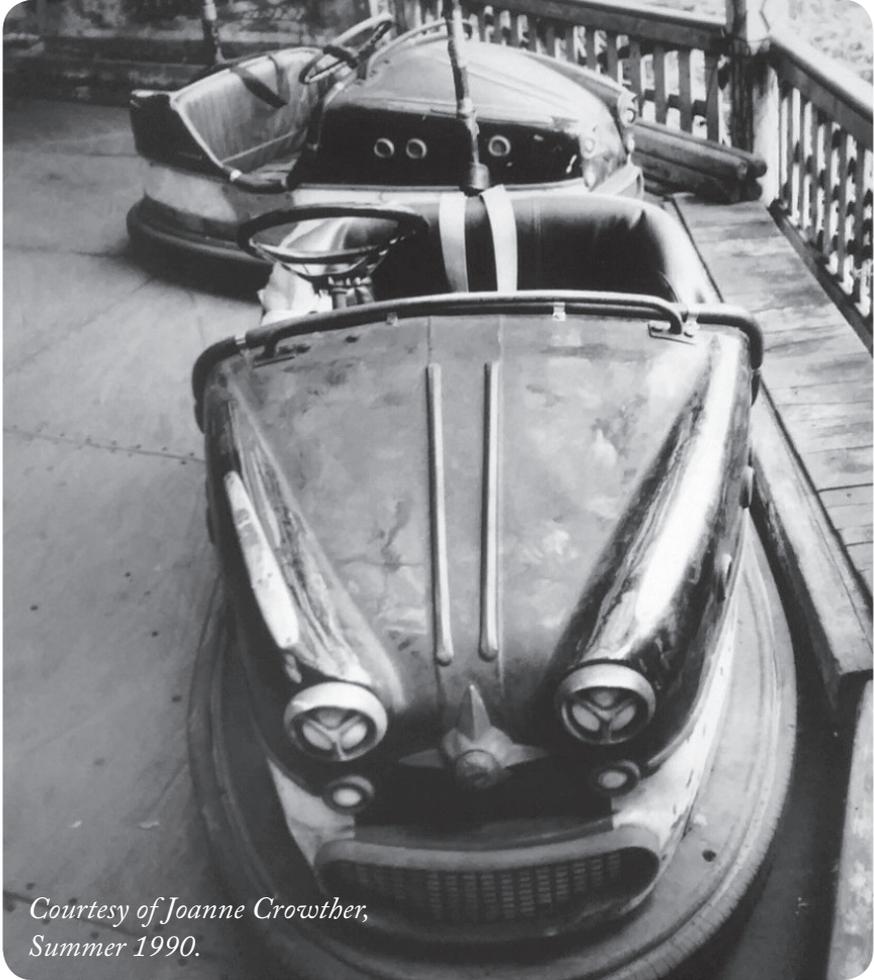
The Bradford Observer advertised the sale of the premises on 16th July 1879 as follows:

*"To be Sold at the well known and highly popular resort known as Shipley Glen, the old established GLEN HOUSE and Refreshment Rooms containing five rooms on the ground floor, with cellaring and out kitchen, nine bed-rooms, also a large refreshment and concert room and cloak-room with gardens and conveniences.*

*The present and prospective advantages of this property are considerable and well worth the attention of anyone intending to enter the refreshment and lodging house business."*



*Tom Hartley working on the early development of the Japanese Gardens.*



*Courtesy of Joanne Crowther,  
Summer 1990.*

The Wysocki family ran the dodgems for a number of years. The vintage dodgems shown above were eventually replaced by new ones. The dodgems and the Glen Tramway were used as backdrops in the TV movie *Blood and Peaches* released in 1995.

## **2018**

The next section describes the hopes and aspirations of the individuals and volunteers who still run businesses or attractions on Shipley Glen in 2018.

## 5. SHIPLEY GLEN CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE - 1846 - 1921

- 5/9/1846 | Lincolnshire Chronicle - Bradford Railway Station three months old...Every day scores of passengers take a ride to get a country walk or picnic at Eldwick Glen.
- 1850 | Charles Clegg Converted Wood Head Farm into a Temperance Hotel.
- 15/4/1852 | Bradford Observer. Eldwick Glen. This favourite retreat of pleasure seekers has since Friday last been visited by thousands of persons of both sexes. On Good Friday there was a constant stream of people pouring to and from the Glen during the afternoon. Though a considerable distance from the town the holiday folk have made this distant place a scene of great enjoyment and the desire which has been thus exhibited by our population for rural and outdoor recreations, which we trust stimulate the friends of the Park Movement to renew efforts to place the means of such harmless enjoyment within easy and almost daily access.
- 21/7/1853 | Bradford Observer. Eldwick Glen Sunday School festivity for 200 children from Lightcliffe, Halifax The trip and refreshments were provided by Titus Salt and included a day at Eldwick Glen where Titus and personal friends mingled.
- 23/7/1853 | Leeds Times - Shipley Glen little known.
- 23/7/1853 | Leeds Times. In the Glen there is an excellent house for refreshment known as the British Temperance Hotel and kept by Mr W. Cooper and has been occupied by him and his ancestors for over two