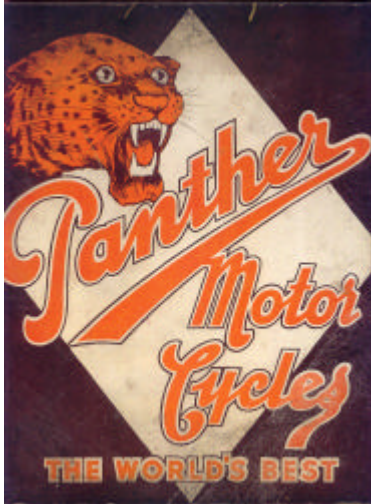


-Welcome to Red House-

Spen Valley Stories Exhibition



The fascinating 'Spen Valley Stories' gallery is housed in the restored 18th Century Cartsheds, in Red House grounds. The gallery is a story of everyday life in the Spen Valley in the 20th Century, told through the lives and experiences of its people.

The personal stories touch the heart of community life through a century of change. The exhibition focuses on aspects of everyday life, including schooldays; working lives; the home; enjoying free time and shopping.

A special feature of the exhibition is the way that personal memories from local people make up most of the displays and also feature as over 40 sound clips, which visitors can listen to through 'telephone' handsets.

Objects made or used in the valley are ingeniously displayed in brightly coloured 'cupboards' which visitors can open to peep inside.



The many fascinating objects on display include a motorbike made in 1918 by Phelon & Moore of Cleckheaton, famous throughout the world for its Panther motorcycles.

Signs from former railway stations in the valley; equipment used in Gomersal Colliery; curious objects once familiar in the home; and old sweet moulds from Lion Confectionery, who made such well-known sweets as 'Midget Gems' and 'Wine Gums' can all be seen.



On a touch-screen computer visitors can explore a selection of fascinating local photographs from the Kirklees Digital Photographic Archive, showing people, places and events over more than 100 years.



Whether visitors were born and raised in the valley, or just here for the day, the exhibition will help people to think about the place where *they* live or come from.

At Home



"Setting up home – it was a bit of a struggle. We had to save for what we needed and get a little at a time."

"Electricity did make a lot of difference – it were a lot cleaner and you hadn't the fear of gas leaking and getting gassed."

Making a Living

Burnley's mill in Gomersal began spinning woollen yarn in 1753 and for much of the 20th Century was one of the main employers in Gomersal and the Spen Valley:

"The first morning I went in it was so noisy when all these machines started up. It were deafening, you couldn't hear a thing and you couldn't hear anybody speak to you and you couldn't answer back. You were shouting to make yourself heard and the noise was terrific." (Bertha)

Freetime

Stevenson's Dancing Academy, known locally as 'Stivis' brought back many memories for local people.

As well as its dancing lessons, Stivis was famous for its night time dances which attracted young people from villages and towns all around the area:



"We used to go to Stivis on a Wednesday night, but me father never found out. It had a bad name but there was nothing ever went wrong, they didn't even sell beer or anything ... We used to tell me dad we were going to Savoy Pictures and we used to be home for quarter past ten, as if we'd been to pictures. And we used to go round the back and put our dance shoes at back of the dustbin, and he thought we'd been to pictures. And he never found out we were going to Stivis." (May)

Spenn Valley Stories exhibition would not have been possible without the active involvement of many local individuals and groups, who were generous in giving their time, objects, photographs and most importantly, their memories, for use in the exhibition.

The exhibition was designed and produced by Kirklees Community History Service and has attracted financial assistance from:

The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund
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