You will be our voices across the valleys!

We’re new, we’re FREE and we’re different!
Welcome to your first edition of Voice of the Valleys, a true community newspaper that plans to be a publication by the people for the people.

Covering the Aire and Worth Valleys and distributed through a network of sources, we aim to have a much larger editorial content than existing media, and we want you to be our voices. Whether you are in the heart of Keighley or the Haworth countryside, we want to hear from correspondents for churches, clubs, pubs, in fact any organisation which people will want to read about.

We also plan to have regular media meetings throughout the area where you can learn what makes the modern world of the media tick and hear from experienced journalists, photographers and broadcasters who will encourage you to be the voices of these beautiful valleys.

We want to be an integral part of the diverse communities in the valleys we serve. We will be a newspaper with good traditional values, we will actively support community causes and charities... and more. How much more is up to you. We want to hear your voices from the valleys.

Graham Smith, Editor and Publisher

Time to silence the knockers!

As we went to press with our first edition our attention was captured by two stories which don’t do the area or the originators any favours.

Haworth’s Changegate car park has brought greater fame to its owner, Ted Evans, than the Parsonage did to the Bronte family.

Once again the man awarded a “Dick Turpin” award came in for heavy criticism from various quarters after his firm Carstoppers clamped a Dutch tourist and made a penalty charge of £240 which attracted the outrage of Haworth Parish Council chairman John Huxley (see page 10). Stories of clamping on the car park are legion so we put various questions to Coun Huxley which he answered fully. Mr Evans has been offered the chance to reply and we understand he has offered to make a refund to the tourist because of the circumstances. It’s the story that doesn’t go away and does Haworth no favours in already troubled times. But every story has two sides.

The other knock comes from a book published on September 5th entitled “Crap Days Out” which has an ill informed side swipe at the village by authors Gareth Rubin and John Parker. Who?

They say, “Haworth, the hillside hamlet where the Brontes spent their lives, has rabidly tenuous links to the literary sisters coming out of its freezing, rain-sodden ears.” Charming.

Whether the book is meant to be funny we couldn’t quite establish but with passages like, “No doubt the sisters wore clothes – there is documentary evidence that they did so – but there is little chance that they produced them in the Bronte Weaving Shed. Especially since it appears to date from the late 1980s, some 150 years after all three dropped their final stitch.”

Quite how the literary pair manage to fill a book with such sarcastic tripe we wonder, but isn’t it time some of today’s literary wannabees had a go at half matching the achievements of the family which shaped history?

Your views on Haworth please to voiceofthevalleys@gmail.com
How to contact us
We want this to be very much a “people’s newspaper” so contact us as often as you like with stories, features, pictures, your forthcoming events and special dates.
E-mail us on voiceofthevalleys@gmail.com with all editorial and advertising enquiries, telephone 01274 404790, mobile 07866 626090, or use our 24 hour answering and fax service on 07092 103738. Messages left outside of normal hours will be answered the following day.
To see us on the web go to www.brontemediaservices.co.uk or you can Tweet us @brontemedia.

Voice of the Valleys
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September Weather for the Valleys
After an indifferent summer can we expect a typical month of mists and mellow fruitfulness? Probably not!
Low pressure is expected to often be in charge during September, so although there are sure to be some drier spells, the month overall is expected to be wetter than normal in all parts, with temperatures a touch cooler than the norm.

Creative writing courses
Creative writing, an online course, or one to one for clients in the Haworth area, which is always individually tailored to the client’s needs.
We can concentrate on different writing styles from short stories and poetry through to journalism, news and features, or tackle the structure and style to set you on the way to writing a novel or factual book, or developing a script.
Our standard charge is £20 per hour discounted to £15 for those committing to at least four hours of tutoring per month for three months. Further discounts are available for clients who wish to commit beyond that.
These courses are designed to be a pleasure and means of developing a creative talent and style. We will always be there in the future to give further help and encouragement, and possibly an introduction to sources where your work can become commercially or artistically accepted.
What to expect. An initial appraisal and discussion of your existing work or, if starting from scratch, our advice on what is best for you.
The subjects we can cover are creative writing, journalism, writing for radio or television, script writing, proofreading, copy editing, poetry or any combination.
Always included is help with grammar, spelling and punctuation, details so often ignored today but which give your work an important degree of professionalism.
Your course will always be handled by Graham Smith, the founder of Bronte Media Services. He has been a journalist, publisher and writer for many years and has worked in newspapers, magazines, radio, scriptwriting, web writing and technical authoring as well as producing, directing and narrating his own musical theatre stage show. He also acts as media agent to a leading UK author.
The use and structure of words and prose is as much an art as painting a picture. Developed professionally it can become a career, a hobby or an invaluable addition to whatever you do in life. They say a picture paints a thousands words. I say that a thousand words can paint a picture.
Tel: 01274404790. Mobile: 07866626090. Email brontemediaservices@gmail.com

People and picture power from our own valleys!
There is a wealth of talent and creativity across the Aire and Worth Valleys and in this our first edition we bring you just a taste of it.
Inside our pages you will meet Santi Udomeksmalleye and see and read about his remarkable journey from NASA to Haworth.
Just what is the truth behind the legend of the Brontes. Read a local man’s story of how influential Branwell Bronte was upon that legend.
Read one man’s story of going from being homeless to publishing his own magazine.
Local lady Sheila Murray advises you how to relax your way into well being.
Columnist Jayne Pickard tells of her crusade to educate people about pancreatic cancer.
We feature two landmark local buildings which are facing uncertain futures.
We hope you Laugh at Life and enjoy our column of the same name.
All this and much more in your very first Voice of the Valleys.

Advertising executives wanted
Voice of the Valleys is looking for committed, hard-working people to become full or part-time advertising executives in the Aire and Worth Valleys.
You will enjoy full support and have a growing commission package which reflects the effort you put into the position, which is flexible and self employed. E-mail voiceofthevalleys@gmail.com or call 07866 626090
Join us on the journey
Holden Hall group aims for takeover

After securing a temporary reprieve for the Holden Hall community centre in Oakworth, an action group has decided to press ahead and attempt to take over its running from Bradford Council who had recommended a sell off as part of swingeing, nationwide spending cuts.

The hall was earmarked for an uncertain future but representations from the newly formed Holden Hall Action Group, supported by Oakworth Forward reversed the decision and now the group has decided to press ahead with investigating a transfer of ownership away from the council, despite its change of heart.

Members of the Holden Hall Action Group were advised by Coun Glenn Miller, Conservative leader of Bradford Council, to seek precise and categoric assurances and a named contact from Bradford Council for ongoing negotiations. The group will also seek written assurance that the hall will not be closed.

At the meeting, attended by Voice of the Valleys, members decided to look at the option of a dedicated group to take on the running of the hall and ongoing support was indicated from Oakworth Forward. Members heard that a petition had already been started which would need 1500 signatures from people living with the Bradford Metropolitan District, although opinion was divided on the effectiveness of continuing with it.

The group also attended a Keighley Council meeting to muster support and intends to set up a friends group to strengthen the case for an asset transfer to a community group which would have more detailed knowledge of community needs.

Originally Holden Hall was given to the people of the village as Oakworth Mechanics Institute and public opinion has swelled to retain it since Bradford Council’s intimation of closure to save £8,000 a year.

Chair of the group is Jackie McGinnis who can be contacted on jacquelinemcginnis@hotmail.com

Hopes for a reprieve for Bronte Schoolroom

Fears that the only building in Haworth that was constructed by Rev. Patrick Bronte, father of the famous authoress sisters, may have to be sold for development by its owners Haworth Parish Church have been placed on hold.

Following a series of crisis meetings between the Church’s Parochial Council and Bronte Spirit, the committee charged by the Church of restoring and developing the Old School Room on Church Street, Haworth, it was decided last week that enough potential support had been received for the restoration project to continue for the time being.

At a meeting it was agreed that archaeologist Dr Angela Redmond, one of the current directors of Bronte Spirit, would lead the project; that the planned application for charitable status would continue and that discussions with two organisations are to be explored.

Dr Redmond, who had been employed by Bronte Spirit when an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was being advanced in 2008, said: “We believe that the building has a future with a role in the community and that’s something we’ll be exploring in the next few weeks.

“We were concerned that the lack of funds and support were threatening the project and we’ve been encouraged by our initial discussions with organisations and individuals who want the Old School Room to be restored and remain true to Patrick Bronte’s vision of having a building available for public good.

“We don’t want to say publicly which organisations have been in touch with us because negotiations are at a delicate stage. No doubt if those discussions are successful it will be possible to make appropriate announcements later.”

Rev Peter Mayo Smith, the Priest in Charge at Haworth Parish Church which is better known to people in Haworth as St Michael and All Angel’s, said: “We’re exploring every avenue and, although we recognise that these are not easy economic times, we believe that it could be possible to secure enough grants to enable us to restore and develop the building as a community asset.

There are fairies in the park!

Holden Park in Oakworth was overrun by fairies of all shapes and sizes when the Friends of Holden Park held their first ever Fairy Festival. Throughout the park, caves and woods, having followed a trail of fairy dust, you couldn’t take a step without coming across fairies, pixies, toadstools a fairy ring, or a fairy dell.

The event was opened by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford Valerie Slater who placed a floral arrangement on the memorial bust of Sir Isaac Holden, who owned the house that stood on the site now known as Holden Park, to commemorate the anniversary of his death in 1897. She was then led to the festival area by a lone piper, where she proceeded to open the event and then spent some time talking to the organiser and stallholders, many of whom had travelled long distances to be there, before leaving to attend another event in Bradford.

Over a thousand people came throughout the day to visit the stalls and attend many interesting workshops at the happiest event you could wish to attend. With competitions, treasure hunts and a raffle running through the afternoon and many and varied stalls choose to from I think everyone found something to please them.

Ingrow scouts ran a very popular burger/hot dog stall, there was a stall selling freshly made pancakes and Oakworth Co-op held a Fair Trade stall so most appetites were catered for. There were stalls selling a variety of goods, including the Royal British Legion selling their goods. Music was provided by group of medieval style players going by the name of Serpentine.

The Mayor of Keighley, Mr Mick Westerman and his Lady Mayoress arrived later in the afternoon, also led to the festival area by the lone piper. They visited the stalls and chatted with visitors and organisers before judging the children’s colouring competition, drawing the winning raffle tickets and presenting the many prizes to the lucky recipients.

Mr Westerman took over the microphone and auctioned a delightful piece of artwork – a black and white stencil of the Cottingley fairies - by a young, local artist, Matthew Roberts, a young artist who had been demonstrating his talents during the afternoon. He also sold an enormous piece of graffiti work and, in fact designed and painted the welcome banner that hung over the entrance to the park. In the near future Matthew will be working with young people, encouraging them to try their hands at producing similar kinds of art work.

The weather, after a poor start in the morning, improved as the day went on and held up for the finale of the event, which was a display of fire eating and juggling by Pele’s Pyromancers, making a thrilling end to the event.

Already people are asking if the event will be repeated next year and, I am sure it will.

Fairy stories?

Do you want to tell them? If you do, or learn about all types of creative writing, Bronte Media runs online or one to one Creative Writing classes for people in the Valleys or beyond. Contact them on brontemediaservices@gmail.com or 07866 626090
As the owner of a small business myself, I do try to ‘Keep Trade Local’. I attempt to patronise local small businesses but, not being perfect (and being a very busy mum of three with the usual daily detritus of washing, feeding, entertaining the darlings and trying to keep the house from disappearing under a mountain of grime), I do succumb to the lure of the supermarkets, shopping centres and internet shopping. This, I reassure myself, is a practical measure in keeping sane by exercising time management skills (i.e. doing everything in one shop in one go). But, the real question is . . . does it really work?

So picture the scene . . . It’s Sunday, my only day off this week. I leap out of bed at the crack of dawn, get one load of washing out on the line and another load in the machine. I leave my family at home (bearing in mind that I work 5½ days a week and spend precious little time enough with them as it is) and race off to the supermarket. My spend is way over budget yet again - down to the extra DVD I treated the kids to (guilty brownie points!).

I’ve just arrived (in budget too - that’ll earn me some superlative points, if I dare say so!) and I’m going to sit and watch that programme I hand-taped earlier this week. 4.30pm and we’re on our way back home to drop off the swimming stuff and bring the washing in because it looks like it will rain before we get back from Grandma’s tonight. Now I remember that I should have got a birthday card (belated, of course) when I was out - maybe mum will have one I can pinch. Do you really have to have those jeans washed for tomorrow? - I’ll put the washer on again and they will have to go in the tumble dryer later tonight.

7.30pm and we’re home in time for the boys to watch Top Gear. Lovely time at mums (and nobody minded having strawberries and cream instead of the trifles I promised), but I’ve just remembered those jeans need drying and all that lovely clean washing that now needs ironing.

9.15pm and I’ve had enough today - glass of wine in hand and I’m going to sit and watch that programme I taped earlier this week. 10.00pm and I wake up as I spill that wine all over myself!

So, tell me then, why I didn’t just do the following . . . Sunday morning and the shopping I ordered on line has just arrived (in budget too - that’ll earn me some brownie points!) Get the trifles jellies done first thing, then off to the baths. I’d forgotten how much I enjoy swimming, and the kids were delighted when they found the splash balls we bought on holiday last year that I’d remembered to put in my bag.

Back home, washing on the line, and off for a walk round Haworth. We’ll park on Mill Hey and walk through the park. Let’s get some guinea pig food from Rhodes Hardware while we’re here and put it straight back in the car. The planting in the park is lovely, and we’ll have an ice cream from the van at the top.

The walk to the top of the Main Street is as good a work out as I’ll get at any gym, and those flowers we bought half way up will look lovely on Grandma’s table tonight. We get to Hartley’s Book Shop at the top at last - I’ve been meaning to call in for months to stock up on birthday cards and yes! she has one for that birthday I missed last week.

Back home now, but let’s stop for a much needed coffee at Coldspring Mills in Cullingworth - it’s even warm enough to sit outside. I’ll get that dry washing straight on hangers then it won’t need ironing later. Custard on the trifles and cream whipped ready to go.

The kids are all chilled out, I think they’ve enjoyed me today as much as I’ve enjoyed them. Mum really liked her flowers (and I really like my new top that I got from Firth’s Boutique - sneaky I know!)

So there it is . . . which Sunday would you rather have? Maybe the idea of ‘Keeping Trade Local’ isn’t such a crazy one after all and, perhaps more importantly, with a little bit of compromise, it is not really that hard to achieve if we really think about where our time goes. Cheers (and don’t fall asleep with your wine)!

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Stress is now one of the most common words in the English vocabulary, describing everything from a missed appointment to a life-threatening diagnosis. So what really is stress? Stress really results from perceiving obstacles to the fulfilment of our needs and desires. The body responds aggressively to these perceived obstacles or threats. It’s called the “fight/flight” response. It’s a stress response that arises from a primitive part of the brain and is designed to ensure our survival. During this fight/flight response, a number of physiological changes occur, which prepare the body to respond aggressively to a perceived threat:

- The heart beats faster.
- Blood pressure rises.
- Breathing becomes shallow and rapid.
- Blood sugar rises.
- Adrenalin production increases.
- The immune system weakens.
- The production of sex hormones decreases.

Numerous scientific studies have evidenced that chronic stress accelerates aging and makes you more vulnerable to serious illness, including heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, panic attacks, immune deficiency, depression, stomach ulcers, chronic fatigue, and migraine headaches.

When you feel overwhelmed or anxious, it is easy to forget that you have choices and that there are many tools and techniques that can help you to feel better right away, yoga, meditation, relaxation training, to name a few. A regular practice of yoga can help bring balance to mind, body & spirit, and when your mental, physical and emotional selves are working in harmony with one another, you can experience clarity, a sense of wellbeing, calmness, peace of mind and enthusiasm for life.

Meditation gives you the experience of pure, restful awareness. As you meditate, the bodily reactions are exactly the opposite of the stress response: your breathing slows, blood pressure decreases and stress hormone levels fall. Primordial Sound Meditation is a simple, natural way of experiencing this deep state of restful awareness.

Relaxation is a state of mind and body that is the opposite of stress. The states of relaxation and stress are incompatible because a person’s mind and body cannot be both stressed and relaxed simultaneously, that is to say that they cannot occupy the mind and body at the same time. Therefore, a person’s mind and body can either be relaxed or stressed. Consequently, the easiest way to remove stress from one’s mind and body is to establish a state of relaxation. Being in a relaxed state in both mind and body, can help to reverse the physiological changes listed above and you will begin to feel healthier.

I run weekly on-going yoga and meditation classes in Haworth and Keighley. The 6-week Relaxation Program will focus upon the most important aspects of your behaviour that concern the Mind and Body. These will include breathing techniques, correct posture, muscle control, positive self-talk and visualisation.

For more information on when you can begin any of the programmes, please contact Sheila on 07799 437174 or 01535 648761 or visit www.sheilamurray.co.uk

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One man’s journey from homelessness to publishing a dream

Hidden Voices came to life after one man’s journey into homelessness and a desire to speak out and change today’s perception of what it means to be homeless.

The early years were surrounded by violence and a care system which repeatedly exposed him to abuse in every form leaving more damage than he had previously experienced at home. From an early age he learned to survive and to build barriers around himself in order to deal with the abuse he had suffered throughout his life — a coping strategy learned by many who have suffered similar backgrounds without receiving support or guidance which is so desperately needed.

For many years he lived the dream, driven by a need to prove himself and feel a worthy human being. He had everything, family, career, money, all the things we are told will make us happy... he wasn’t.

Over the years he experienced addiction to drugs and alcohol, trying to self-medicate the pain of his past and fill the gaps of need even though he couldn’t identify what those needs were. These pathways eventually led to him losing everything and ending up on the streets... many who he came into contact with had experienced similar backgrounds and this became more and more apparent whilst he was living in a Salvation Army Hostel.

He decided to speak out and create awareness around these issues which still today remain hidden and out of view to many, thus the Hidden Homeless Foundation was created to give these people a chance to tell their story and reach out to others who are still in need and suffering because of their circumstances mainly created from childhood experience and a system that repeatedly lets them down — even in adult life.

Hidden Voices is a magazine written and produced by homeless and ex-homeless people. Our desire to show the public that homelessness is an issue on so many levels speaks for itself within the content of the publication. We hope to break down the barriers between those who need support, those who give it and those that need to hear about it to understand the impact that homelessness is having within today’s society and communities.

Our readership covers service users, service providers, and support providers on all levels including mental health, drug & alcohol support teams and homeless projects and charity’s as well as the general public. Anybody needing support, advice, a chance to change their current circumstances and issues through experiencing hardship will benefit from our workshops, drop in centre and networking opportunities through this publication and their involvement. The team that work together on this magazine have all experienced discrimination, hardship and closed doors when trying so desperately to find help and are deeply passionate and driven to ensure that changes are made and voices are heard to benefit society on a whole and ensure that we have made a difference and that our personal experiences have been put to a higher good and purpose.

Contact Hidden Voices through voiceofthevalleys@gmail.com

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Gaddafi and me

“… I met a traveller from an antique land…”

He was an Italian print journalist from Corriere della Sera and we were both attempting to do the same thing — a profile of Gaddafi, he in print, and me for television. We had met in a Tripoli hotel, and for some time, shared one frustration or other. Tomorrow we were to be off to Benghazi where Gaddafi would be presiding over the official opening of a new Petroleum Institute. After we had taken off from Tripoli airport, I noticed quite by chance that the sun was not coming through the windows from the direction I thought it should have been doing. Then, where there should have been the blue of the Mediterranean on the left hand side there appeared to be the khaki colour of endless sand dunes. We were flying south, not east. After flying for twice as long as we would have done if we were actually flying to Benghazi, we landed in a military airfield near the old Italian fortress town of Sabha, in the northern reaches of the Sahara. (Which is where, in one theory, Gaddafi had located himself at some time during the Libyan crisis.)

Much confused we discovered that the ever-suspicious Gaddafi had two different flight crews flying him around, and they, in turn, each lodged three entirely different flight plans with the air traffic control authorities. That’s if it was actually Gaddafi who travelled in the plane — there was much talk amongst knowledgeable people about body doubles — quite credible allowing for the frequent wearing of dark glasses and the exotic bedu clothing. And there was always the all-female bodyguard, just in case.

But we were certainly in Sabha as Gaddafi probably was as well. Certainly someone looking like him did review the troops of Libya’s Islamic Legion returning from battling in the Sahara, where they had backed one of the sides in Chad’s civil war, while conveniently taking over for Libya a fair chunk of Chad’s territory while doing so. The Islamic Legion was made up of a combination of mercenaries recruited for the purpose from French-speaking black Africa. The military recently involved in attacking the anti-Gaddafi demonstrators conspicuously could not speak Arabic.

Anyway we did eventually get to the official opening of Benghazi’s Petroleum Institute, but this time were told that we were going with Gaddafi (?) to visit Gaddafi’s birth place, the town of Sirt on the Gulf Of Sidra. You could see the blue Mediterranean just outside Corriere’s Milan offices, we went our ways, never to meet again.

In Sabha, we had met in a Tripoli hotel, and for some time, shared one frustration or other. Tomorrow we were to be off to Benghazi where Gaddafi would be presiding over the official opening of a new Petroleum Institute. After we had taken off from Tripoli airport, I noticed quite by chance that the sun was not coming through the windows from the direction I thought it should have been doing. Then, where there should have been the blue of the Mediterranean on the left hand side there appeared to be the khaki colour of endless sand dunes. We were flying south, not east. After flying for twice as long as we would have done if we were actually flying to Benghazi, we landed in a military airfield near the old Italian fortress town of Sabha, in the northern reaches of the Sahara. (Which is where, in one theory, Gaddafi had located himself at some time during the Libyan crisis.)

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Well, almost.

Some time later, I was asked by a teacher friend, if I could come along to a very relaxed end-of-term meeting at her school and give a talk to the assembled classes about my life and works. Sure.

Understandably the journalist prefers to remain anonymous but is a good friend of Voice of the Valleys.
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A resistant killer which spares few
by Jayne Pickard

Pancreatic Cancer… A disease that I had never heard of, that is until October 2009. Now if I hear them they strike fear into my heart. Why? Because those were the two words that we heard when, after numerous tests, my wonderful Dad was diagnosed with it. The man by whom I have set the standard for all men in my life and to whom not one of them could ever come close to. This cancer is hardly ever heard of, we were told that it is quite rare, I have to admit that it had I certainly hadn’t until that fateful day.

Dad had had health problems for over three years. He had gone from being a gregarious, outgoing and generally fit man, who was an active member of Airedale Male Voice Choir to a virtual hermit. His appetite disappeared and he complained of facial pain, a constant drip from his nose and we noticed his pallor was very pale. In the summer of 2006, he underwent surgery at Bradford Royal Infirmary on a lump in his mouth. It turned out to be benign, but this seemed to be the trigger for his problems. One particular day at the beginning of October, a mere week after my Grandson, Joseph, was born; Dad rang me to say that his urine was brown. Alarm bells rang; Dad was a drinker, not in an alcoholic sense, but he liked his whisky and a pint or two, always had done! Assuring him that it was probably a Porphyria episode (he was diagnosed with this in 2001), and hoping that it was, I went to see him. In the five minutes it took to drive over there (I live in Haworth and Dad in Keighley) all kinds of scenarios ran through my mind; from the very worst (cirrhosis) to the simplest (water infection) and when I walked through his door I knew in my heart that it was possibly closer to the worst than anything else. The whites of his eyes were yellow; a sure sign that the liver wasn’t working and as I dialled the doctor’s number I sent silent thoughts to my Mum (she passed away 2001; I’m not religious) for her to make sure that he would have set the standard for them.

Dad had never been one for doctors and hospitals, very few of his generation ever went there thinking that they are right. What we need to start doing is to trust our doctors to know what’s best for us, to diagnose us and treat us, so we go away thinking that they are right. What we need to start doing is question things, go armed with information from whatever source, the Internet or medical books and ask if they think it could be a cancer. The statistics need to be higher for survivors of this dreadful disease and being informed is the first step towards that goal.

In memory of Bob Pickard 29.04.1934 - 6.01.2010

Pancreatic cancer is the fifth biggest cancer killer in the UK. Only 3% survive once diagnosed and for 90% once symptoms show it is usually too late for any kind of treatment other than palliative care to ensure those final weeks and days are made comfortable. These statistics have not changed since 1970.

The symptoms are as follows:

- Pain in the upper abdomen going through to the back which goes away if the body is bent forward. It can be constant, or fluctuate.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Nausea and/or sickness. Indigestion.
- Pale stools, diarrhoea or change in bowel habits
- Dark coloured urine.
- Jaundice
- Loss of appetite or feeling bloated after meals
- Feeling extremely tired
- Depression

Quite often the symptoms are seen as something else by the medical profession, which is easy to do, after all the above list could pinpoint many other medical problems such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome or a stomach ulcer. We trust our doctors to know what’s best for us, to diagnose us and treat us, so we go away thinking that they are right. What we need to start doing is question things, go armed with information from wherever source, the Internet or medical books and ask if they think it could be a cancer. The statistics need to be higher for survivors of this dreadful disease and being informed is the first step towards that goal.

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A Titanic feast before disaster struck

It was a different world which made Gordon Ramsay look like a motorway café waiter. The world of fine food and wine aboard the ill-fated super liner Titanic as she sailed to her doom on that April evening back in 1912. Many of these dishes will be recreated during a multitude of celebrations to mark the centenary of the ship’s loss next year.

Even third class passengers on board ate to a standard which you might expect in the finest restaurants of today, so what must it have been like in first class on that dreadful night when so many were to lose their lives in the freezing waters of the Atlantic Ocean?

First class passenger Mrs Walter Douglas said: “We dined the last night in the Ritz restaurant. It was the last word in luxury. The tables were gay with pink roses and white daisies, the women in their beautiful shimmering gowns of satin and silk, the men immaculate and well groomed. “The stringed orchestra playing music from Puccini and Tchaikowsky. The food was superb; caviar, lobster, quail from Egypt, plovers’ eggs and hothouse grapes and fresh peaches. “The night was cold and clear, the sea like glass.”

Meals on board the Titanic were not cooked, they were choreographed in an Edwardian age the like of which we will never see again.

On board this ship were some of the world’s most powerful and richest people.

Put them around a dining table and the sheer opulence and quality which went into the occasion were unbelievable.

The Titanic had the most advanced kitchen facilities ever seen afloat. In three huge kitchens a staff of more than eighty toiled round the clock preparing nearly 6,000 meals a day.

Care to join me for dinner? First class of course.

The table would be set elaborately with fresh flowers and bowls of fruit. A folded White Star Line menu card would be at each place and a carnation boutonniere for each gentleman.

The music would be Palm Court style. Each gentleman would be introduced in a reception room to the lady he would take down for dinner and aperitifs would be served along with exquisite hors d’oeuvre.

The bugler on board Titanic would call the passengers to dinner with the tune “The Roast Beef of Old England”. Observe the etiquette and sit your lady to the right of you.

Your prime duty would be to engage in conversation with her although it was permissible to converse with the lady on your left if your partner was distracted elsewhere.

Each course would be presented on a silver salver and passed around from guest to guest. The wine was an important affair for the Edwardians and there would be a separate glass for white, red and sparkling wines and a fresh glass for each selection. It’s believed that there were 70 brands of champagne on board, 54 types of Bordeaux and 48 Burgundies, Moselles and Italian wines.

Now, the serious business of eating. We would be talking eight courses, dessert and coffee. We would have started with quail’s eggs in aspic with caviar. The quail’s eggs may have been substituted for plover.

To follow would be Spring pea soup, potage Saint-Germain, a light soup made from the puree of fresh green peas and named after Louis XV’s war minister, Comte de St. Germain.

The third course would be fish (poisson). Delicious Lobster Thermidor with Duchess potatoes and then the entrée of Tornedos aux Morilles, tournedos with morels on a bed of braised cabbage. Nothing could be more elegant than the main dish of tender beef and wild mushrooms. Morels are one of the most coveted fungi and would sit magnificently next to the medallions of beef on a croute (potato cake), or a bed of braised cabbage which would absorb the meat juices.

If you’re still with us it’s time for the sorbet of Punch Rose, a rose water and mint sorbet. Rose water was a great favourite for flavouring with the Edwardians.

The fourth course was quails with cherries (cailles aux cerises). Game birds were greatly favoured in those days and were the essence of a classic French meal.

The vegetable course is Spring Asparagus Hollandaise (asperges printanières avec sauce hollandaise) followed by a selection of sweets without which no Edwardian meal was complete. How about Macedonie de fruits? Named after the ancient kingdom of Macedonia it would include pears, peaches, plums, currants and lemon juice and be sprinkled with toasted almonds.

An amazing selection and afterwards, of course, would come port, cigars, brandy, whatever you wished for before eventually collapsing into bed to prepare for breakfast, which even in second class would be a choice of Fruit, Oatmeal Porridge, Rolled Oats, Yarmouth Boaters, Grilled Mutton Chops and Chips, Broiled Sausage and Bacon, Minced Collops, Irish Stew, Eggs Boiled, Scrambled or Poached, Mashed Potatoes, Hot Milk Rolls, Graham Rolls, Jam, Marmalade, Tea, Coffee or Cocoa.

And the prices? A bottle of Verve Cliquot, now available on mortgage only at off licences, would have set you back £14, a bottle of Hennessey brandy was just 7s 6d and a bottle of sherry was £5 even in those days!
Time to ring the changes at Haworth’s infamous car park?

Ask most people what they know about Haworth and the likely answers will include the Bronte sisters and infamous car park owner, Mr Ted Evans, and not necessarily in that order!

Mr Evans, christened “Dick Turpin” following a special award made to him for his infamy, has stirred up as many emotions in the Bronte village as Heathcliffe did on the windswept moors above it. The legendary Heathcliffe is probably the only man who could park his horse on the Changegate car park without a ticket and not be clamped.

The equally legendary Mr Evans has a reputation for clamping down hard on transgressors on his car park and has stirred as many emotions among his victims as any of the Bronte sisters.

It is “the clammers’ car park” in folklore. It’s been filmed for television, almost as often as Jane Eyre, but Mr Evans maintains that if motorists obey the rules there is no problem and they will involve the huge penalty charges invoked by his Carstoppers operation.

Enough has been written in the media to fill another Bronte volume about the car park, and in the latest chapter Mr Evans and his team brought the response from Haworth Parish Council chairman, Coun John Huxley, that he was “ashamed” of the image his beloved village was getting because of the clamping saga. Even Lady Betty Boothroyd took up the cudgels in the House of Lords after she and a friend were clamped, her words were not complimentary.

In the latest reported episode, and there have been many, a Dutch tourist was reportedly slammed with a hefty £240 in penalty charges, although we understand, in fairness to Mr Evans, that a refund is to be made because he felt the guidelines imposed had not been strictly observed.

We asked Coun Huxley what might be done, before legislation may curtail clamping on private land, to protect the village’s reputation in the interim. “This is entirely dependent on Carstoppers Ltd., and indirectly Mr Ted Evans. The law currently favours them and I would hope that they would adjust their business methods to adopt a more equitable and humane system of penalties in Changegate Car Park. History suggests that they are unlikely to do so until the Freedom Bill becomes law although I would like to think I was wrong in that thought,” he said.

So what does he, or others, say to irate visitors, many of whom storm out of the village vowing never to return?

“I have a file of complaints from motorists who have been penalised by Carstoppers Ltd., in Changegate Car Park. Many of them say that they do not feel they have done anything wrong and even complain about their treatment after being clamped. I respond to their complaints by explaining that the Parish Council, nor Bradford Council, nor even the Police have any powers to intervene in their dispute because Changegate Car Park is private land. I also advise them that the Security Industries Authority is also unlikely to be much help to them either. I always explain that what Carstoppers Ltd., are doing is legal and that I have been in touch with our Member of Parliament; Keith Vaz MP at the Home Affairs Select Committee and the Home Office in the fond hope that one day the Law will be changed.

Did he think that there could be more leniency in some cases?

“I would hope that Mr Evans and Carstoppers Ltd., would take a more realistic approach to what after all is only car parking. To levy a penalty of £240 as they did recently to a female tourist from Holland is, I would suggest, far more than can possibly be justified,” he said.

Often a clamping causes acute distress to the victim. Coun Huxley said, “It is a matter of deep regret for me, and I suspect many other people in the village, if any of the people who are clamped and penalised by Carstoppers Ltd., become distressed. Most of us will, at some time or other, have picked up a parking ticket and know how annoying that can be. But at least municipal car park operators are open to appeals and will relent if a motorist can prove that they have a reasonable explanation for their situation. This does not appear to be the case with Carstoppers Ltd., if you are penalised in Changegate Car Park.”

We suggested the possibility of a round the table meeting for the benefit of all concerned and Coun Huxley did not discount it.

He replied, “I cannot speak for all the councillors but I suspect the Parish Council might be minded to broker a meeting if we felt that the outcome might benefit everybody concerned. However I, and my fellow councillors, would have to be convinced that Mr Evans and Carstoppers Ltd., were prepared to abide by the outcome of the meeting and see an immediate alteration to the penalties policies within the Changegate Car Park. Without Carstoppers’ agreement to that principle I suspect such a meeting would not be able to meet its objectives.”

One media comment suggested that there was a vendetta against Mr Evans and his car park.

“It is beyond dispute that Mr Evans and Carstoppers Ltd., are operating a legal business. The issue at point is the way in which they run that business. So far as I can see most people would not bat an eyelid if somebody was clamped for being very late back to the car park. They would have been an accessory to their own downfall but it is the fact that the draconian penalty of clamping is applied even for so many lesser matters that raises the temperature between aggrieved customer and Carstoppers Ltd. I don’t believe that there is a vendetta against anybody just a reaction to the way in which Carstoppers Ltd., apply their penalties’ policy,” said Coun Huxley.

We have attempted to contact Mr Evans and he will be given a full right of reply to comments in this story.

Have you been clamped on Changegate car park? Send your comments and views on the situation to us at voiceofthevalleys@gmail.com and we will publish a selection in our next issue.

By Graham Smith for Voice of the Valleys

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Did Branwell’s wild life shape the face of the Bronte legend?

A world exclusive from Voice of the Valleys...daring to be different!

Is the Bronte legend quite what it seems or was the enigma spun around their lives a result of the wild excesses and influence of their brother Branwell?

In this, the first of a series, re-searched by a local man over several years, we explore previously unknown information which produces an amazing theory.

The sound in his ears gently crackled and vibrated, a million distant bees, a sky was black from horizon to horizon. A white spotted, red capped explosion slowly outwards into brightly coloured shards. Each piece of glass rolled lazily towards him, morphing firstly into jewels and geometric shapes then into symbols and signs. A pentagram, a compass and set square, an eye, a crucifix, the star of David all blowing by like snowflakes to reveal a temple in the distance. He flew between two enormous pillars, through the temple doors and up a wide flight of stairs. Then he was running, striding up steps that were high and steep until he burst through a door at the top and into his father’s study.

As the son of the local vicar, Branwell held a privileged position in Haworth village and was educated at home by his father Patrick. He was well read in politics and world events not to mention gaining an almost gnostic understanding of the biblical texts.

On each side of his father’s desk sat two Globes spinning to a blur on their axis, producing a vibration in the air, a resonance that was taken up by the walls causing the stones to join back together into the boulders from which they were heewn and then stretch into sheer cliffs that unfolded into the distance.

It was partially through Patrick Bronte’s connections (and partly his own creative and unusual personality) that Branwell Bronte was introduced to the local branch of the Freemasons, Lodge 408 of the Three Graces. It was to be one of the few places that his visionary nature was to be recognised and nurtured — but also used to ultimately destroy him. In 1836 a letter written by John Brown, WM. and Joseph Redman, Secretary to The Provincial Lodge of Freemasons, “We beg leave to inform you that a young Gentleman, the Rev.P.Bronte’s son, has made application to us, wishing to be admitted into Masonry, but he is only about 20 years of age, in consequence of which, we (in conformity with the constitutions) do hereby apply to you for a dispensation for that purpose. The Rev.P.Bronte is the Minister of the Chapelry of Haworth, and always appears to be very favourable to Masonry. Therefore we hope you will furnish us, by return of post, with proper authority to admit the young gentleman into our Order”. Branwell was initiated into the lodge and quickly rose through the ranks to Master Mason before becoming a founding member of the York Lodge at Duncombe place, opposite York Minster.

But it wasn’t merely Branwell’s special creative talents that forged his path and popularity in freemasonry, he had exclusive access to something that they wanted. His three sisters. It was a relationship that would see the Bronte story manipulated and managed, a contrivance that continues to this day. An old woman, bent slightly and lean- ing on a stick, stood in the maw of the valley. White spotted, red capped mushrooms sprouted about her face and rose above her head. Birds of various colours and sizes flew out of the spots and their shadows turned into crows that pecked in waves from the canyon floor until the sky was black from horizon to horizon. A garguantuan pupile in the centre of an eye that stretched far too far away to see. Beyond the home he received a different style of education from the housekeeper, Tabitha Ackroyd. A respected wise woman around the village who was known for her knowledge of the old ways, of folk tales, fortune telling and healing. Tabitha had been employed following the death of Branwell’s mother and soon became an invaluable substitute. It could be said that the opportunity provided by Tabitha gave the children a much wider and more varied experience of life than would have been possible from their mother. It gave them an understanding of two class systems and two belief systems. Tabitha would often take Branwell and his sisters on walks across the local moors and spent much time at Penistone Hill which was to become the microcosmic and para-cosmic location of their stories of Angria and Gondol and was later used to describe places in both Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights.

Tabitha introduced them to time tested wisdom, to magic and paganism and to special megalithic sites. Through her they learned of herbalism, astrology, the green man, the geography of fairy land and where to find fresh spring water or see the shadows align on the equinox. The eye blinked closed and darkness, briefly, turned darker and down into a snow blown mist that breathed and swirled and flowed into barely perceptible forms. A wall, floor and sky that consisted of layer upon layer of faces and creatures, chariots bearings skeletons that morphed and rolled on top of one another, becoming something else before ever fully materialising into what they were. A roaring avalanche of briefly recognisable forms that threatened to consume him but instead settled and crystallised into a foggy winter moorland. The figure from before remained but was now a small child, surrounded by a glowing white light. It looked up and held out a threadbare rag doll rabbit.

Read the second instalment of this thrilling interpretation of the Bronte legend which turns history on its head only in Voice of the Valleys next month.

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Jacko’s guitarist to play in Keighley!

Autumn heralds a brand new season at Keighley Blues Club with their intimate and friendly Cougar Park venue hosting a series of exciting acts up to Christmas and beyond.

Triple nominee in this year’s British Blues Awards, Ben Poole; ex-Michael Jackson guitarist Gregg Wright and five times ‘Best Female Blues Vocalist’ Connie Lush plus long established Scottish band Rev Doc & The Congregation will all be appearing at the club before Christmas.

Gregg Wright will be at KBC with his band on Friday 4th November. This Texas born self proclaimed ‘King Of The Rockin’ Blues’ association with both Albert and Freddie King prompted relocation via Louisiana to Los Angeles in the 1980s where he became a much sought after session guitarist. Awards, albums and tours with Mick Fleetwood, Michael Jackson, the Gap Band, Spencer Davis and others followed. Gregg is a featured soloist on the IMAX film soundtrack “Ocean Oasis” with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. To this day, Gregg Wright is the only person in music history to have played with the two biggest record sellers of all time! Special Guest for this gig comes in the form of a solo performance by ‘Lights Out By Nine’ front man Al Hughes.

Friday 14th October finds notable Scottish Band Rev. Doc & The Congregation visiting the Club for the first time. Doc has been playing the harmonica for over 20 years, three times being voted Best Harmonica Player in Britain. One of the genuine characters of the blues scene, Doc is backed by a superb band that features Alan Brown on guitar, ex-John Martyn bassist Alan Thompson and Davy Boyle on drums. The band’s Chicago style blues programme is a delight, combining well loved standards with cleverly penned originals – the band’s restrained live version of Sonny Boy Williamson’s slow blues ‘Nine Below Zero’.

Send your event details to voiceofthevalleys@gmail.com

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Animals on parade!

It’s always great to see a show and Keighley Show has to be one of the best. Voice of the Valleys visited the recent event at Marley Fields, the 54th, where shire horses mixed with miniature goats, sheep, cattle, dogs and ferrets and there was a vast selection of stalls and attractions. The weather stayed fair to attract excellent crowds and organisers said they were delighted with the response. We hope you are with our pictures on this page!

I’ve had a long day, don’t bull me!

Stop fussing I’m beautiful as I am!

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Laugh at Life
by Graham Smith

Health and Safety and Hot Air!
Reading the entire collection of Health and Safety rules which dictate our lives today would be a suitable prison sentence for murder. New ones are added daily by some overpaid barmpot in Whitehall and two I came across recently are worth of mention.

In the beautiful Bronte village of Haworth there is an annual event in June to celebrate the 1940s. Everyone and their granny descends on the village, some villagers have been known to move out for the weekend to avoid the crush, and many dress in period costume singing “We’ll Meet Again” increasingly loudly as the local brew takes effect.

Until three years ago part of the spectacle was a fly past by retired World War Two aeroplanes, usually a Spitfire, a Hurricane or a Lancaster Bomber. Now these planes are still airworthy, there was a problem.

The Spitfire won the Battle of Britain. Hitler and his army eventually chucked the towel and his army eventually chucked the towel because they couldn’t down enough of the planes to win. It’s a good job Bradford Council wasn’t on his side or he’d have won.

The organisers of the Forties Weekend had to conduct a Health and Safety and feasibility study and here was one of the questions:- “What was the likelihood of one of the planes crashing onto the village during the flypast?”

Now we don’t see many Fokkers or Messerschmitts over Haworth these days and the Home Guard was disbanded some years ago. The only aerial threat we have is from the Home Guard.

The Spitfire won the Battle of Britain. Hitler and his army eventually chucked the towel and his army eventually chucked the towel because they couldn’t down enough of the planes to win. It’s a good job Bradford Council wasn’t on his side or he’d have won.

The last line of every one of these pieces always referred to a lady offering services of a dubious nature to the reporter who invariably wrote, “I made my excuses and left”…now they have.

Is it an age thing?
Maybe it’s me but I cannot see the attraction of a tattooed woman. Perhaps an odd butterfly might catch the eye but some women today look like a Michelin road map, and that’s only the bits you can see.

If you stop and stare at them, or worse still try and read the words, you’re likely to be smacked in the eye, so what is the point?

I recently met a high ranking business type lady who was smartly dressed but as she stood up and turned I spied a snake’s head on her bared old dear’s derriere.

There’s a hole in your bench
Amazingly the same village got a double dose of daftness when the local council decided to recobble and landscape the bottom of Main Street.

A lovely 12-month old wrought iron bench was removed to facilitate the work and it hasn’t come back.

There’s a hole in your bench
Amazingly the same village got a double dose of daftness when the local council decided to recobble and landscape the bottom of Main Street.

A lovely 12-month old wrought iron bench was removed to facilitate the work and it hasn’t come back.

For years locals and visitors have enjoyed relaxing on the bench and no injuries have ever been reported apart from the odd drunk slipping off the edge and nearly falling under the Oakworth bus.

The locals of yesteryear would have sat there and watched horses and carts go up and down the steep cobbled street posing some hazard if one set off at the gallop going downhill.

But we can’t have the bench back because a health and safety executive decision said a child might get their finger stuck in the wrought iron!

Oh, do me a favour. There are still stocks at the top of the street, what if someone gets trapped in them while having their picture taken? I’ve seen women in stiletto heels pirouetting like Margot Fonteyn trying to walk down the street and not get trapped in the cobbled sets. But we cannot have our bench back. In fact some half wit has now decided it is so dangerous that it is to be repainted and auctioned off.

I suppose we can’t have a wooden one either in case a splinter develops and punctures some old dear’s derriere.

That told him!
Doesn’t your heart go out to the 68-year-old Devon shopkeeper who, when confronted by a thief with a knife, picked up a screwdriver and told him to p--- off or use it?

Police had previously warned the shopkeeper that he could face assault charges if he went for a burglar and hurt him. Isn’t it ridiculous? I suggest that if anyone else tries it on with him the gentleman shoves the screwdriver where the sun doesn’t shine and the police can’t find it.

Crazy drivers
For once I had great sympathy with a traffic warden as he booked a motorist for parking on double yellow lines and with two wheels on the pavement, directly opposite a free car park for the shop he was visiting.

They’re pretty slick now these wardens. They travel in pairs and can write a ticket more quickly than ever and one takes a picture for the record.

Exit driver from shop and he immediately begins casting doubt on the parentage of both wardens who stand back with their arms folded. I stand back wondering what next.

The idiot then gets in his car and drives away at full speed with half the car still on the pavement and goes straight at me. I stepped out of his way and turned to see the warden quietly slipping his mobile phone from his pocket and smiling at me.

“Not very bright was it sir,” he said to me, “He forgets we have his number and so will the police shortly. His fine just went up.”

I like it.

Making their excuses
So the News Of The World has gone. What an unholy mess which will be debated for many months.

I remember reading the paper when it still had half an ounce of credibility left, back in the 1960s. Every other piece used to be about a seedy old hack visiting houses of ill repute and exposing the owner for running a brothel and living off immoral earnings.

The last line of every one of these pieces always referred to a lady offering services of a dubious nature to the reporter who invariably wrote, “I made my excuses and left”…now they have.
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From NASA to Haworth in pictures!

A former engineer on the NASA space programme has swapped the stars for life as a freelance photographer in Haworth!

Santi Udomkesmalee was born in San Diego, California and grew up in the South Bay area of Los Angeles where he became interested in music and science. Now he can be found wandering the Bronte countryside and has already found work as far afield as Leeds and Manchester due to his talents.

Santi worked on Mission Operations for the Mars Exploration Rovers (MER) and was a mass properties engineer on the Mars Science Laboratory, now due to launch in November this year.

It was when it was announced that the MSL launch was to be delayed in 2009 that he decided to leave his job with the idea of travelling round the world. He flew to South America and never went to another continent after he met his partner Rebecca in Peru. They spent several months travelling together in South America and that is where he fell in love with photography. The couple moved to Haworth last year since when he has gained experience working on commissions and plans to make photography his career.

Here is a selection of Santi’s pictures. For more visit his web site and blog at www.santiu.com

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Crossword

The solution to this crossword will appear in the next edition of Voice of the Valleys. If you can’t wait that long, go to www.brontemediaservices.co.uk