

BARTON NOVELISTS

During the latter half of the 20th century there was a spate of novel writing in Barton-on-Humber. Dr T.H.Kirk wrote several children's books. Henry Treece, published more than 70 books. Ted Lewis wrote 10 novels, one of which was made into a film.

Tom Kirk

Born in 1899, Tom Kirk came to Barton as assistant to his Uncle Dr. Naismith, who had taken over the Morley practice in Burgate in 1921. In 1924 Tom took over the practice himself, and his uncle returned to Northumberland. In 1927 Dr. Kirk took George Gilmore into the practice as his partner. Soon after this Dr. Bradnack, partner to Dr. Birtwhistle in the rival practice, married Nora Kirk, Tom's sister. The Kirk practice and the Birtwhistle practices amalgamated. During the war Tom's Peggy joined the practice to replace Dr Gilmore who had joined the RAMC.

Tom and Peggy Kirk were very active in the town, and joined in many activities. The Dramatic Society benefited when Tom wrote a number of plays for them. These they produced, and performed on the stage of the Oxford Cinema in Newport. One of the plays was submitted to the BBC, who twice broadcast it on the radio. Before he retired and returned to Northumberland in 1965 Tom wrote several novels. These were published in the 1960's. These were in the style of Arthur Ransome, and aimed primarily at young readers. Copies of three of them are held by the North Lincs Library. These are:-

"Back to the Wall"

"The Ardrey Ambush"

The River Gang"

Henry Treece

A later arrival in Barton was Henry Treece, who was appointed as a master to Barton Grammar School in 1939. Within a few months of him taking up his appointment the war started. In 1940 Henry enlisted and was commissioned as an Education Officer in the Royal Air Force. When he was demobbed at the end of the war Henry returned to his post at the Grammar school, where he was a very successful teacher. In the mid 1950's he started writing novels, many of which were based on historical themes or on Greek Mythology. These proved so successful that he retired from teaching in 1959 to devote himself to writing full time. He was a prolific writer. More than 70 of his books were published. Copies of 38 of his titles are held by the North Lincs Library Service. These are:-



The Exiles
Last of the Vikings
The Great Captains
War Dog
Hounds of the King
Tomorrow
The Viking Saga
The Jet Beads
Red Settlement

Killer in Dark Glasses
The Golden Strangers
Man with a Sword
Horned Helmet
Viking's Sunset

The Invaders
Splintered Sword
The Rebels

Fighting Men
Legions of the Eagle
Herbert Read
Vinland the Good
I cannot go Hunting

Swords from the North
The Road to Miklagard
The Queens Brooch

**The Windswept City
The Dark Island
Dylan Thomas
Bury Your Dead
Castle and Kings**

**Electra
Don't Expect Any Mercy
The Eagles Have Flown
Bronze Sword
The Children's Crusade**

**The Crusaders
Dream Time
Ask for King Billy
The Burning of Njal**

Ted Lewis

Ted Lewis was born in 1942, and came to Barton as a child, when his father became manager of the Quarry and Lime Works at Melton Ross. During much of his childhood he lived at 20 Westfield Road. Educated at Barton Grammar School, where he was doubtless influenced by Henry Treece, he started to write soon after leaving school. He was an accomplished artist, producing many fine drawings and paintings. He left Barton and lived in a number of places in the South, where most of his writing was done. Sadly he started drinking heavily, and this not only led to the break up of his marriage, but also led to his premature death in 1982. Some of his line drawings of Barton are held by the Civic Society, and are used on their Notelets. Copies of 10 of his books are held by North Lincs Library Service. These are:-



**All the way Home, and all the Night Through
Billy Rags Boldt**

Jack Carter the Mafia Program

GBH

Get Carter

**Jack Carter's Law
The Rabbit**

Jack's Return Home

Plender

In view of the big contributions which they made, both to literature and to the reputé of the town, the Civic Society proposes to erect plaques to commemorate these three on the houses in which they lived.

In addition to these major authors, Dr. John Swaby, who was Vicar of Barton in the 1960's had a book published entitled "The Marshmen". Three ex pupils at Barton Grammar School went on to publish novels after leaving both school and town. Although we still have much talent in the town, our current authors write non-fiction. Rex Russell, Geoff Bryant, Ron Newton, Enid Bryce and numerous members of WEA classes have been writing up aspects of the history of the town, and of the town's contribution to the 1939-1945 war, and these excellent books have been privately published by the WEA. Novel writing however is different. It requires the imagination to invent plots as well as the ability to fashion them into a story which "grips" the reader. For about 50 years novel writing flourished in Barton. Will anyone continue the tradition into the new millennium?

Jim Robertson, (on behalf of Barton Civic Society)