

Crookes History Booklets

These short explorations of local history topics were compiled by Constance Hallwright

Also known as 'The Bustle Lady'

Crookes, Sheffield, February 2018

The Solvo Laundry

The Solvo Laundry was located at the bottom of Lydgate Lane, on the site of the Alexandra care home complex currently, just above the Old Grindstone public house. It obviously had to wait until piped water was laid on, and drainage to take away the used water.



It operated using a series of drop-off and collection points, strategically placed around Crookes. One house on a road would be the 'Receiving Station', where every customer would bring their laundry, bagged up in their canvas bag. Each item had to be marked with their name using an indelible pen. A horse-drawn waggon would call on that area's collection day, and collect all the bags. At the same time, they would drop off the freshly laundered, ironed and starched laundry, neatly folded and placed in a clean canvas bag, labelled with the customer's name. This meant you had to make two trips to the Receiving Station for your area, but at least you didn't have to go far. The great advantage of this system for the laundry was they only had to make one stop for each road, and didn't have to wait for an answer from someone who might not be in. The Receiving Station was

identifiable by a blue and white enamel sign affixed to their front approach, and they got a slight discount for the trouble of having to hand out the correct bag to everyone.

The laundry was a godsend for householders, saving masses of hard work and time, but it wasn't cheap, so only fairly affluent people would have used it. However, it provided useful employment for a number of local people, as can be seen from the photograph.



The laundry was still in operation in 1968, but self-service laundrettes rendered it obsolete.