

Hebden Bridge Community Association



Media release

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CALLING ALL GREENWOODS!

TOWN HALL TO STAGE CEREMONY FOR 'FORGOTTEN HERO'

A special invitation is going out to everyone in Hebden Bridge with the family surname Greenwood to take part in a ceremony next month (June) which will see the Town Hall's committee room renamed the Greenwood Room.

Trustees of the member-controlled Hebden Bridge Community Association have announced the name-change in honour of one of the town's forgotten heroes. Joseph Greenwood, who was a fustian cutter by trade, became a leading figure in the nineteenth century cooperative movement in Britain, and led for many years the pioneering Hebden Bridge Fustian Manufacturing Co-operative Society. This successful employee-managed business operated from Nutclough Mill from 1870 until 1918. Greenwood was also responsible for educational developments locally, including the establishment of the Hebden Bridge Mechanics' Institution. He was on the local council for over thirty years.

"What could be more appropriate than to have a room in our Town Hall dedicated to the memory of a Hebden Bridge man who did so much for our town?" says Andrew Bibby, for the Community Association. "He was the son of poor handloom weavers, who, by the time of his death in 1924 was well-known nationally, and indeed in the cooperative movement in Europe."

Appropriately enough, the renaming of the committee room as the Greenwood Room will be performed on Monday June 21st by Dame Pauline Green, the President of the International Cooperative Alliance, the global organisation representing all parts of the cooperative movement. Dame Pauline, previously the head of Cooperatives UK, is also a former leading MEP.

The renaming event is taking place during the first-ever Co-operatives Fortnight, designed to celebrate the past and present success of cooperation in Britain. Also speaking on June 21st will be local historian Justine Wyatt, who has made a particular study of the life of Joseph Greenwood.

The surname Greenwood has long been especially associated with Hebden Bridge. According to the National Trust Names survey, based on academic research and now on the NT website, there are more Greenwoods proportionately in Hebden Bridge than in any other postal town in the country. The National Trust points out that exactly the same held true also in the year 1881.

The renaming ceremony, which will last from 7pm to approximately 8pm, is open to all, but with numbers limited by the size of the room initial priority will be given to anyone locally with Greenwood blood in their veins. To receive a free invitation, please contact the Community Association at the Town Hall on HB 845261.

Andrew Bibby adds that light refreshments will be served. "However, in tribute to Joseph Greenwood's strongly held temperance beliefs, we will be steering clear of alcohol for the evening and toasting his memory in elderflower cordial and dandelion and burdock."

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