

Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin



Volume 16 Number 3 Autumn 1986

BULLETIN
OF THE
SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 16

Number 3

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1986

Contents

Page

The Castleshaw Intaglio	37
The Stayley Rental	38
The First American Woollen Mill	43
Saddleworth Court Rolls, 1756	46
An Introduction to the Life and Work of Ammon Wrigley	48

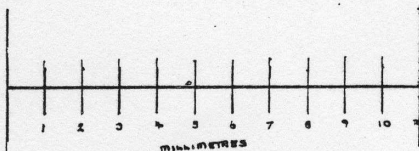
THE CASTLESHAW INTAGLIO



As reported in the 'Oldham Evening Chronicle' of 13 June 1986, and in the July issue of 'Popular Archaeology', an interesting Roman gemstone has been discovered at Castleshaw by the Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit, directed by Mr. David Start.

The tiny oval of chalcedony, a form of quartz, only 11 by 14mm. is incised with a carving of the Roman Goddess of Wisdom, Minerva. She was the counterpart in Roman mythology of the Greek Goddess Pallas Athene.

The intaglio (a gem with incised design), the first to be found on the site, would have been set in a soldier's signet ring, mounted in iron or bronze, and used to impress wax seals on official documents.



Minerva was Wisdom but was also a war-like goddess, popular with soldiers as was Mars her male equivalent, and often appears on intaglii and on coins, especially those of the Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96).

She is normally depicted standing and carrying a spear and shield (the mythical aegis of Athene) and wearing a helmet, like Britannia on old pennies. Sometimes she holds a small figure of Victory, her attendant owl, the symbol adopted by the city of Athens, or a patera, a bowl used in sacrifice.

On the Castleshaw intaglio, Minerva holds a spear in her right hand with the shield beneath her right foot. She wears her helmet but what, if anything, is in her left hand is indistinct; it may be a patera.

Minerva led soldiers safely through battle and the dangers of war, where victory comes through wisdom, courage and determination. Epithets she attracts include 'Pacifera', bringer of Peace, and 'Victrix', victorious, a favourite idea of the legions.

The photograph of the intaglio which appears on the front cover of this 'Bulletin' is by Keith Maude. This article is the first in a series of presentations of the small finds at Castleshaw.

J.C.C.

THE STAYLEY RENTAL

The Stayley Rental is a catalogue of the lands of the Lord of Stayley in the townships of Ashton, Matley, Quick, Newton and Stayley compiled about the year 1400. It lists the tenants of his holdings in Saddleworth during the years 1397 - 1433 and is therefore the earliest known rental of our township. One page of the rental is reproduced in Winifred Bowman's England in Ashton-under-Lyne, published in 1960. Mrs. Bowman discovered the rental in the Stamford Estate Office in the course of her research for her book and made extensive notes which are now with her papers at the Lancashire Record Office (DDX 350). The Rental cannot now be traced, either in Ashton or in any likely record office or library. This article is based, therefore, on Mrs. Bowman's incomplete transcripts of the Saddleworth entries and must be regarded as an interim report on the assumption that the original document will come to hand.

The earliest list of Saddleworth tenants transcribed by Mrs. Bowman is for 1397/8:-

Petrus de Traford
Robtus de Staveley
Willo de ffernylegh
Willo del Schagh
Johs de Merslond
Prioressa de kirklez
Ricus de haukyord
Robtus del ffernylegh
Elyas de Bradschagh

Dna de ffulthropp as a tenant; she has also the herbage
of Grenfeld

Tenants at will

Robtus del Plat
Willo Wrygley
Roger del Sykes
Johe de Merslond
Thomas de Qweywall
Willo del Haukyard
Willo del ffernylegh
Ricus de Lyngardes; idem Ricus p lez lanes
Ricus Qwyteheved
Willo de Prestesson
Tho. fil John del Haukyard
John de Oldum capell

Most of the individuals on this list are named after their place of residence. Many of these names survive today, either as place-names or surnames. There is a clear distinction between the names at the top of the list, presumably the freeholders of the township, and the 'tenants at will' or leasehold or copyhold tenants. Such a distinction would only be made by the Lord of the Manor yet the de Staveley family owned only a few estates in Saddleworth which are described elsewhere in the rental. The obvious conclusion that the de Staveleys were collecting Saddleworth rents on behalf of the Lord of the Manor is confirmed by the heading over the list for 1423:-

Tenentes dmn. Willi Lovell ceper'nt ten. sua' de
Radulfo de Staveley, senescalo scil't dmn. de Lovell
ad terminn'Anno R.R. Henri sexti post qquesti' scdo.

Evidently Ralph de Staveley, as one of the freeholders of Saddleworth, was acting as the seneschal or steward of William Lovell, the then Lord of the Manor of Saddleworth. Lovell's claim to the Manor was successfully disputed in 1424 by William Scargil (1) whose descendants continued to hold the property until the end of the 16th century.

Mrs. Bowman's notes are not always clear, but her next transcript of the names of Saddleworth tenants is attributed to the ninth year of the reign of Henry IV, 1407/8:-

Free Ten. Saddleworth

Robtus del Schagh
Petrus de Trafford
Robtus de Staveley
Johe del ffernylegh
Willi del Schagh
Johe de Merslond
Robtus de Staveley p le honlyngreve
Prioressa de kyrkleghez
Thome del Haukyerd
Raufe Chethm
Robtus del ffernylegh
Johe de Bradschagh

Adm. de haderisshagh
Willne del Sykes
Idem Wille p Willwfeld
John de Bucley
Robtus del ffernylegh
Willne de halle
Robtus de haropp
Willus le spenser

Molend de Sadelwyrth x s. ix d.
Erbağ & Grenfeld iiij Mⁱⁱ

Apart from this very early reference to a mill in Saddleworth, and to some exclusive right of pasture in Greenfield, some interpretation of this list is appropriate. The Prioress of Kirkstiles was the owner of land in Diggle by virtue of a grant made by Robert de Stapleton (2). The fields near to Holden Smithy were until modern times known as the Nun Ings. John de Bradshaw was the absentee landlord of Grasscroft whose descendant sold the freehold to the Buckleys in 1598. The inclusion of John de Bucley is the earliest reference to the family in Saddleworth.

Mrs. Bowman did not make a full transcript of the list for the eleventh year of Henry IV (1409/10) but did make the following notes:-

Willo del Hagh owes 4/3 for feghyng of marle in Grotton

Saddleworth (Mollendum agnatitu xxs. xxd.
(Molendum ffulatitu viis. ixd.

Richne Bemon viis. ixd.

Willmo le Walker debt. vs. vid alocat: p. ffulat.. suas

These notes are particularly valuable. The spreading of marl or clay dug from marl pits was the common means of fertilizing unimproved land. There are innumerable instances of the field name Marled Earth in Saddleworth. The references to a fulling mill and to a person with the occupational surname Walker show that the local woollen industry is indeed very ancient.

Apart from the lists of tenants and the rents they paid, the Stayley Rental contains a precise description of the lands of the de Staveleys in Saddleworth. The following is a translation made from Mrs. Bowman's transcription of the Latin original:-

Land Measure in Grotton and Schelderlowe in the Vill of Quick

First in the premises between the Cnoll and Schelderlowe

1½ a

Item and in Crowlegh from the Cnoll Clogh upwards along an old ditch in above the Thornleghe and from the said ditch to the house of Grotte as much as

2a 1r 32p

and situated at the Lene

7a

Item in Grotton and Grueschagh from Grotton Brook as far as the Piked Lowe as much as

58a ½r 1p

Item in Schelderlowe from Grotton Brook ascending as far as the house as much as

33a 1r 27p

Item in the Cnolle a common (?) meadow as much as

5a Or 30p

Item in the north part of Alstonlonds as much as

4½a

Item in the Newrode as much as

1½a

Item in the Kar between the Cnoll and Paldenlegh as much as

7½a

Item in the Smartrode in the same vill

4a Or 6p

Item in the Whitelegh 8a ½r of arable land and meadow situated lying in

Item in Fernilegh of arable land, wood and meadow

36a Or 3p

Item in the Hollyngreve of land and meadow

9a Or 5p

Item in Wolverode and Watson Erth of land and meadow

8½a

Many of these place names are in use today, some are to be found in more recent documents, and others we can only guess their location. The Cnoll appears to be an early name for Stonebreaks Hill and the Kar to be the modern Carrhouse. The Lone is presumably Lane, and Grueschagh must be Crowshaw Bent. Pikelow was the name given to the fields around Lydgate crossroads. Alstonlonds is obviously the early form of Austerlands, Newrode is the valley above Waterhead where Newroyd Mill once stood, and Paldenlegh is the older and fuller name for Lees. Smartrode was the name of the fields either side of the River Tame below Grasscroft. Wolverode is evidently Woolroad - the third of these names to include the term 'royd' meaning a clearing in a valley - shewing just how early these clearings must have been. Watson Erth remains a mystery - perhaps the name will be mentioned as a field name in a later document yet to be found.

The illustration overleaf is a reproduction of Mrs. Bowman's photograph of the final page of the Stayley Rental. It shews a fragment of a 14th century treatise on hunting, Twicci's Le Art de Veneri which was copied into the Rental, but the list of Saddleworth tenants in 1429/30 on the opposite page is all but obscured by the sheepskin cover. The following is a transcription:-

Rental de Sadylworth de Anno Termo med Martin' A ^o	
Henr' Sext' post conquestu' octavo	
Richis de Bucley	iiij
Radus de Wheywall	viiid.
n't Wryghley	iis.
del ffernyley	viiis.
Tayleor	
les	
de liber Red'	viiid.

The last entry on which Mrs. Bowman made notes appears to be dated 1433 and the following names may relate to Saddleworth:-

Cecilia Wheywal
Nycolas Bucley
Robert Wrygley
Hugyn Taylyor
Dycon Harop
Jenekyn Taylyewr
Robert Wyntturbothm
Wylly (? Songnes, Scugues ?)
Jon farneley
Wyl Coke
the Rygge
the New halle
Schokyn Taylyor p jankyn kenwurthay

The patchy nature of Mrs. Bowman's transcriptions and the difficulty of interpreting her notes are all too clear from the disjointed nature of this article. It is to be hoped that the original document will be rediscovered and further revelations made about Saddleworth's manorial past.



The old sheep-skin covered "Rental of Assheton, Staveley, Longedendale, and Sadyllworthe ffrythe", shewing part of the translated fragment of Twicci's Le Art de Venerie.

References

1. Radcliffe, J. Parish Registers of St. Chad, Saddleworth, Vol. I, p. 475.
2. Ibid. Vol. I, p. 470.

J.M.H.

THE FIRST AMERICAN WOOLLEN MILL

During the summer of 1984, an American couple, Col. and Mrs. Broun H. Mayall, visited Saddleworth Museum whilst on holiday in this country. Col. Mayall is descended from the Mayalls of Earnshaw Head and Lawton Fold (Grotton) and was attempting to discover more about his ancestors. Since that time we have been in regular correspondence, out of which an interesting (if somewhat improbable) story has emerged.

The story begins with one Johnny Mayall (1), the third son of John and Alice Mayall of Lawton Fold. Johnny lived at Lawton Fold with his parents until shortly after his marriage to Mary Shaw in 1770 when he moved to Calfhey. Like many young men of his day his religious convictions tended towards non-conformism and he became a Baptist. His beliefs were indeed so strong that as there was no local chapel he took his children all the way to Bacup to be baptised, a fact that has somewhat impeded our research! (2)

By the 1770's and 80's, the local woollen industry was booming but the beginnings of the factory system brought prosperity only to a few and hardship to many. Johnny, a clothier, saw his future in America. Drawn perhaps by the stories of the riches to be made, he made his first exploratory trip across the Atlantic sometime in the 1780's (3). A clothier and a Baptist, he was naturally attracted to New England, the centre of both the woollen industry and non-conformist religion in the New World. The land he found was ideal, providing excellent grazing for sheep and fast flowing streams for water powered machinery and he resolved to settle in this veritable clothier's Paradise.

Johnny returned to this country in 1789 and soon aroused the interest of his nephew, Samuel (4). The invention and development of new textile machinery was taking place at a rapid rate and was placing the English woollen industry way ahead of the rest of the World. As a consequence, the industry was subject to much protectionism with the export of any machinery and the emigration of 'artisans' being prohibited by Act of Parliament. Samuel and Johnny realised that if they could evade the law and establish a water powered carding and spinning mill in New England, they would leave the competition standing and make a fortune.

The two budding textile magnates began to make plans to smuggle two carding engines out of this country. Keeping such an operation secret was difficult and the authorities soon became suspicious. Samuel was arrested on at least one occasion, although he was soon released (5). Now even more determined, Samuel set to work concealing the parts of the two machines in bolts of cloth which were to be shipped to America. He then took the cloth to Liverpool and arranged for its shipment on a ship bound for Boston. Just before the ship sailed, he secreted himself in the hold (as a mechanic, he was barred from emigrating). His disappearance was soon discovered

and a cutter despatched to try to stop the ship, but its search was in vain.

Samuel landed safely in Boston where he was soon joined by Johnny. The pair then established a small carding mill in Providence, Rhode Island. Carding, however, was already mechanised in America and competition was fierce. To gain the advantage, they had to be able to spin. Samuel, now an outlaw, was forced to stay in America and so it was Johnny who returned to organise the smuggling of more machines, presumably early mules or 'jinnies'.

Knowing the animosity he had created amongst his former colleagues, Samuel always exercised caution when opening and unpacking the cases of materials as they arrived. In one box he discovered a bomb so triggered that when the cover was ripped off it would explode. Fortunately, it proved to be a dud. On another occasion, realising that no delivery was due, he immediately smelled a rat. Cautiously lifting the lid from behind he narrowly avoided the discharge of a pistol concealed within.

The Mayalls were not discouraged and in 1791 they rented an old grist mill in Gray, Maine. They installed their carding and spinning machinery and a few hand looms and thus established the first mill with powered spinning in the continent (6). Johnny Mayall left Gray about 1795 to establish another mill in Lisbon, Maine. His son Robert took over the role of organising the transport of machinery and first travelled to America in 1801 (he returned at least three times). Johnny made his final visit to Saddleworth in 1805 when he returned to take his family to Maine (7).

The bulk of this story has been handed down by word of mouth to the descendants of Samuel and Johnny in America. It has, no doubt, been embroidered over the years but we will never be able to prove it one way or the other. We can only be certain that in 1791, two Saddleworth men established America's first mechanised woollen mill.

Anne Haken and Mike Haken

Notes and References

- (1) Johnny Mayall, Baptised 22 June 1745, son of John and Alice Mayall of Lawton Fold (Saddleworth Registers), married Mary Shaw 17 Dec. 1770, died 26 Nov. 1835, Gray, Cumberland, Maine, U.S.A.

- (2) The children of Johnny and Mary are as follows:

James,	baptised	2 April 1773	at ?	(date from family record)
Robert	"	24 June 1776	at Ebenezer Chapel,	Bacup.
Margaret	"	3 April 1778	" " " "	"
John	"	8 Oct. 1780	" " " "	"
Mary	"	12 July 1786	" West Street Baptist Chapel,	Rochdale.
Joseph	"	2 Dec. 1793	" ?	(date from family record)

- (3) We have no firm evidence of this trip, nor of many of his later trans-Atlantic crossings. All dates given are those recorded in the 19th century by a descendant.
- (4) Samuel's identity remains somewhat of a mystery. We have been told that he was Johnny's nephew, but we can find no record of him in this country. His son, Samuel, described his father as being born in Saddleworth, England. Samuel died in Gray, Maine, U.S.A. It is said that he believed that after his death, he would return to earth as a sheep and he had his tomb constructed in a pasture so that his soul would not have far to travel!
- (5) Evidence for this may exist in the Quarter Sessions Rolls, but our search has so far been fruitless.
- (6) A letter from Samuel Mayall Jnr. in 1829 states that his father was involved in the production of woollen cloth entirely by machine in 1791. Although the first power loom was patented by Rev. Edmund Cartwright in 1785, such early machines were not successful. The power loom was not perfected for over twenty years, and it seems unlikely that the Mayalls would have had anything more than hand looms. We cannot however prove this either way.
- (7) This final journey is recorded in the diary of Johnny's son Robert. We have been unable to track down this valuable document which may possibly provide evidence for the rest of the story. It was last seen some ten years ago by an American researcher.

SADDLEWORTH COURT ROLLS, 1756

Manor of Saddleworth }
or Quick } The Court Baron of James Farrer Esq.
holden for his Manor aforesaid at the Dwellinghouse of James
Broadbent Innholder in Saddleworth aforesaid on the twenty
third day of June in the year of our Lord 1756 before the
free Suitors of the Court of the Manor aforesaid and Samuel
Fenton Gentleman Steward of the Courts of the said Manor.

Inquisition there taken the day and year abovesaid upon Oaths
of

James Harrop Sworn

Joseph Lawton }
James Seville } Sworn
James Buckley }
Henry Buckley }

William Buckley }
Daniel Winterbottom } Sworn
Robert Broadbent }
John Radcliffe }

James Rhodes }
John Broadbent } Sworn
Alexander Schofield }
James Bradbury }

Pains laid by the above said Jurors as follows

Wee Lay a pain that John Bradbury of Diglee do make up his
fence Lieing between the Wherestone and Cloughhead (1) (between
the Land belonging to him and George Platt) in good and
Suffecient order (and Keep up the Same) before the twelfth
day of July next or forfeit to the Lord of the Manor by
default the Sum of (2)

Wee allso Lay a pain that James Wheawall or Martha Wheawall
do putt the Barn (now in the possession of James Scholfield)
in Good and Suffecient repair on or before the thirteenth
day of July next or forfeit to the Lord of the Manor by
default the Sum of 39s.

Wee allso Lay a pain that Joshua Wood do putt his houseing
Called Crompton Cottage in good Repair before the twenty
Ninth day of September Next or for default to forfeit to the
Lord of the Mannor the Sum of 39s.

Wee allso Lay a pain that John Bradbury of peters to Keep the
Water which shall arise or run down the Slades (for the time
of his Lease) in the antient and accustomed Courses or for
each default to forfeit to the Lord of the Mannor the
Sume of 30s.

(1) The words underlined have been crossed out and the words
"Two Marses" substituted.

(2) The whole of this entry has been crossed out and no
amercement entered.

Wee allso Lay a pain that James Bradbury do open his water Courses at primrose hill and Keep the Water in the antient Course before the first day of September Next or for default to forfeit to the Lord of the Mannor the Sum of 3s 4d.

Wee allso Lay in pain that James Broadbent do putt his Barn in good and Suffecient Repair on or before the first day of June or forfeit to the Lord of the Mannor the Sum of 30s.

Wee amerce alixander Scholfield for not appearing at this adjourned Court being one of the Jurors in the sum of 5s.

July the 8/1756 Wee the Within Named jurors Together With Two of the Right Honourable George Earl of Warringtons Servants (to witt) Mr John Hobson under steward and Mr James Brown Senior Bailiff of ashton underline, Togiether with Severall other Gentlemen and freeholders then assembled in order to view the Boundary Mears upon the Moors in Saddleworth (Called High Moor, Roebuck Low, and Badger edge,) Between the above said James Farrer Esquire And the Said Earl of Warrington and free holders And by diligent Search and Enquirey made by the Said parties, Some antient Mears where found out, And by Measuring the Land by the Maps found out the places where some mears was, and other places where mears where diged up, and accordingly in Such places fixed mears of Large stones 7 or 8 and ordered two Letters to be Cutt thereon according as the Land Lay, (vizt) A Large F on the one Side and a W on the other Side by the Consent of all the Said parties, Wee the Said Jurors adjudging the premises abovesaid to be right according to the best of our Knowledge and Inquisition

James Harropp

Robert ^{his} Broadbent
mark

Joseph Lawton

John Radcliffe

James Seville

James Rhodes

James Buckley

John Broadbent

Henry Buckley

James Bradbury

his

William X Buckley

Mark

Daniell Winterbotham

(To be continued)

A.J.P.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF AMMON WRIGLEY

A paper presented to Saddleworth Historical Society, 31st August 1986, the fortieth anniversary of Ammon Wrigley's death

At Far Hey, a bleak row of cottages on the edge of the Friarmere moors, Ammon Wrigley was born on the 10th of October 1861. The setting was apt. The storm battered houses, once the homes of handloom weavers, set amidst unrewarding land, "the cold grey fields of Oxhey" Ammon Wrigley once called them, spoke eloquently of a world in retreat. The decaying world of his childhood on the moor edge was to fascinate Ammon Wrigley for the rest of his life. The departed glories of the handloom weaving age and the high noon of the small time farmers, "wheelbarrow farmers" as Ammon Wrigley styled them, were constant themes in his work.

The background of his parents was dissimilar. His father came of an impoverished branch of an old Saddleworth family. His mother had been brought up in relatively comfortable circumstances in Huddersfield. She recalled vividly the shock she had on coming home to her husband Thomas's house on her wedding night.

"I had pictured a homely little bedroom with lime washed walls, old fashioned furniture, carpeted floor and white curtains to the windows. When I reached the top of the stairs with a candle in my hand I was never more shocked in my life. As far as I could see from the doorway it was a dreary old barn more fit for cows than for humans. The candle gave a poor light and as I peered into the room I saw a bed near a handloom, and on one side there was a little chair. Trembling with fear I went to the chair on tiptoe. The pillow and bed covers were clean and a piece of coarse sacking served for a carpet. I had sat on the chair for a few minutes when I thought I heard something stir in one of the dark corners of the room, and I jumped to my feet and almost screamed with fright. I had just undressed when I chanced to look towards the windows and was startled to see that they were without curtains. I rushed to the candle to put it out, but I had no matches to re-light it. I went to the windows and looked out. There was not a light to be seen neither on the hillsides nor in the valley. Nothing but darkness and no sound but the wind from the moors moaning about the lonely old house. When I thought of the little bedroom at Huddersfield, and how I heard people talking and laughing as they went home from the theatre, I began to cry and tears ran down my face as I said my prayers. I afterwards knew that children were born among looms, for bed and workroom were one in most cottages. I have seen the dead in their coffins between looms, and in the old water-mills a corner of the cardroom was partitioned off for the carder and his family to live in. I knew one old couple who lived in a mill and slept in a bag of wool as they had no bed".

There is no evidence that Thomas Wrigley ever used the handlooms. He was fully occupied at Denshaw Mill, bluntly described by Ammon Wrigley as "as rotten a hole as ever fouled the green earth of Saddleworth". The wages were 12/- per week and the truck system was in full operation:

"In old directories you will find the hellish combination 'Manufacturer and shopkeeper', and when such men died the world was well rid of them, and the air purer when they ceased to breath."

Thomas Wrigley changed mills and the family moved house with some frequency, living at Hey and Springfield, both on the moor edge, before coming to Millcroft in the Castleshaw valley when Ammon Wrigley was five. The change of landscape made a deep impression. In Rakings Up, Ammon Wrigley wrote:

"Coming in spring from the bleak treeless fields and black stone walls of Far Hey, to Millcroft with its trees, gardens, fields and meadow hedges filled my young eyes with wonder and delight."

All his life Ammon Wrigley loved the Castleshaw valley with a love that was made all the more poignant when the reservoirs covered the scenes of his childhood:

"If I wished to see a countryside that looks heart-broken I would go to the Castleshaw valley."

Yet when over 80 he could still affirm that:

"For all its silence and desolation the Castleshaw valley is the dearest bit of earth I have ever known".

At the age of seven Ammon Wrigley was sent to Castleshaw School. If we are to believe his own account he learnt little there and at nine became a piecer to his mother in the mill. His own words take up the story:

About this time I saw a few lines from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village". It was like seeing a light from heaven that I had not seen before, and I would have given the clothes off my back for the complete poem. "Sweet auburn, loveliest village of the plain". All day long I kept repeating the lines I knew, and got cursed at the mill for losing myself and allowing my "ends" or broken threads to run down in the mulegate. A few weeks had gone when I saw "The Works of Oliver Goldsmith" among other books in a newsagent's window at the village. There were also Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Longfellow, Cowper and other poets that I had not heard about, all bound in yellow paper covers and published by John Dicks, London. The price of Goldsmith's Works was ninepence, and I thought my mother might lend me sixpence, but I did not ask her for just then work at the mill was so bad that our joint wages were barely sufficient to provide food, fire and rent. We paid three shillings and sixpence a week for a living room, small kitchen and two bedrooms. I had not spent the threepence my father had given me and how to make it into ninepence was beyond my thinking and scheming. I had a miserable time for it seemed certain that someone would buy the

book before I had saved the money. Almost every night in the week I hurried home from the mill, bolted my porridge, and ran to the village sometimes in the rain, to see if the book was still in the window. I had about a mile to run, but I would have run two rather than gone uneasy to bed about it. If people went into the shop while I stood outside wet and shivering, I thought they were going for the book, and always glad when they came out with it still in the window.

Ultimately Goldsmith's Works were bought and soon imitations were produced, Ammon Wrigley's career as a poet had begun, its vicissitudes are well told in Rakings Up.

When Thomas Wrigley moved to Song Mill (otherwise Woodhouse Mill) in 1875 the family fortunes improved. Ammon attended the Mechanics Institute in Delph which did much to stimulate his reading and launched him as a lecturer. In 1883 he began working at Bankfield Mill where he remained until 1932 working in the warehouse supervising the despatch of shawls rugs and caps which were made in the mill.

Ammon Wrigley married in 1890. There followed a series of removals from Friar Lodge to Beswicks in 1896, from Beswicks to Hilltop in 1907 and from there to Stamford Road, Lees in 1916. This last move, taking him as it did out of Saddleworth into the alien environment of brick terraces must have come particularly hard but it was undertaken with typical consideration because Ammon's son Wallace needed to be nearer his work in Oldham.

The 1890's saw Ammon Wrigley's interest in flint hunting begun and his friendship with Morgan Brierley, whom he only got to know two years before his death, and the scholarly G.F. Buckley helped to further his interest in the past. He remained unconfident about his abilities as a writer until Thomas Thompson persuaded him to publish Songs of a Moorland Parish in 1912. Many consider this his best book. It certainly brought him a good deal of local recognition and established him as a successful writer. In April 1913, at a dinner held in his honour in Uppermill, Ammon Wrigley was presented with 100gns and although Thomas Thompson his mentor died in 1916, he would never again lack a publisher. Too old to be called up for the Great War, his writing continued. Wind Among the Heather came out in 1916 followed by Old Saddleworth Days in 1920. Both sold well.

The inter war years saw the re-publication of some of his work and rather slender additions to his output. Wider recognition followed. Phyllis Bentley and other regional writers corresponded with 'the Saddleworth Poet'. The Ammon Wrigley Fellowship was founded in 1931 and although Ammon himself gave it precious little practical encouragement, it flourished well into the 1960's. Ammon Wrigley had become a legend in his own life time. He had joined that very select

company of English literary figures distinguished by the foundation of a society in their honour while they were still alive. His contemporaries found his ideas or his expression, or both, compelling and they deserve closer examination.

In the introduction to Rakings Up Ammon Wrigley roundly declared his contempt for politics:

"I have never voted at a Parliamentary or District Council election as I know little about them and care less".

The ignorance might be assumed but the indifference was genuine and politics never intrudes into his prose or poetry. Superficially this is surprising for a man who could be so critical of his own society but he, like his beloved Goldsmith, realised:

"How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure."

About religion Ammon Wrigley was much more ambivalent. He rejected institutionalised religion:

".... nothing but holy rites, observances praying
and long winded preaching."

Yet he retained a respect for opposition true religion could offer to the growing materialism of his age. Doctrine was of no concern so that Ammon Wrigley's religious ideas resolved themselves into an unsparing denunciation of conventional piety coupled with a vague deism perhaps best summed up by his comments on Jim Hulley who:

".... went to no chapel but that of Nature which is
the first God made, and the first that man worshipped
in, and has still the old holiness about it."

In spite of this, Ammon Wrigley was proud to record that his ancestors had all belonged to the established church, here his love of tradition clearly defeated his scepticism. At a personal level, Ammon Wrigley's wide tolerance and human sympathy ensured that he could respect individual churchmen, such as Hugh Doig, Vicar of Saddleworth, and Canon E.L. Hicks, later Bishop of Lincoln.

Ammon Wrigley was a connoisseur of character. If he valued one thing more than another it was individuality. Those who would not conform, those who refused to bow to authority, those who remained true to themselves all attracted his admiration. Take for example Joe o' Brebs:

"Joe was not cut out for sipping sacramental wine and
bowing and scraping to country squires at a church
door."

Ammon Wrigley's own individuality was strong, strong enough for him to reject the leading passion of his father who he admired so much. Thomas Wrigley's whole life revolved

round the shooting of game, yet Ammon never shot a bird on the wing. Curiously however Ammon Wrigley rather approved of hunting with hounds, of cock-fighting and even of bear-baiting. He argued that tough sports produced manly men and good soldiers:

"If I have read history aright I have found that the cockfighting bullbaiting and dogfighting men of England were the only men in the world who held a check and finally crushed Napoleon."

Ammon Wrigley's advocacy of ale is well known and now perhaps needs no apology, though living in the shadow of the temperance movement Wrigley is often too strident in praise of its virtues. In the middle of the First World War he went so far as to attribute Germany's military success to that nation's love of ale.

The historian A.L. Rowse has remarked that "History is a nostalgia for life subtly transmuted", and Ammon Wrigley's writings illustrate that process. Born amid a world in retreat he hung on to its remains. Old inns, old houses, old industries and old customs were meat and drink to the antiquarian in Ammon Wrigley and antiquarianism informed his whole work. He cited with approval the dictum of Jules Janin, "I know nothing as dangerous as progress", and he proceeded to live up to this:

"I have not seen a play or an opera, and only been twice to the pictures."

It would be intriguing to know whether he succumbed to the wireless!

The past so often seemed better. Of a handloom weaver who could leave his loom to follow the hare, Ammon Wrigley remarked:

".... good was the age that gave him the privilege to do it."

He wrote approvingly of Joe o' Brebs:

"There was a mellowness about him which told one that he had come out of an age that was ripe with good things. When he sat with younger men in the inn corner he made them seem green and sour - the product of a cold and sunless age."

Ammon Wrigley did a good deal of sitting in inn corners and thereby picked up a vast amount of information, mainly about the past, and in the process became, paradoxically, a man of his age. For up and down England at the turn of the century there were a surprising number of individuals who were probing the past by using the recollections of the aged. In the West Country, Cecil Sharp was recording English folk song before it vanished. The squire's son Sabine Baring Gould,

once curate of Horbury outside Wakefield, and well known as the writer of 'Onward Christian Soldiers', was busy in Devon recording and romanticising the rural scene. On a much higher level the Rev. J.C. Atkinson was writing 'Forty years in a Moorland Parish', the product of a great deal of sympathetic listening and careful enquiry. In the south east, the work of both George Sturt and Richard Jefferies derives much of its strength from conversations these authors had with the old. Ammon Wrigley was the perfect listener. A great deal of his work is based on tales he first heard in inn corners. His vision of the past is essentially the past as seen by the old, full of regret and a wistful longing for the return of a better age.

As an historian the output of Ammon Wrigley is formidable. When a young man he made himself a master of the prehistoric, and flint hunting became a life long passion. His pamphlet Saddleshaw its Prehistoric Remains was described by a leading contemporary authority as the best little handbook for beginners. From 1897 onwards he was involved with the early excavations at Castleshaw and it says much for his powers of persuasion as well as the esteem in which he was held by local antiquarians that he was the prime mover in the first digging there. Twice Ammon Wrigley excavated bloomery sites and slag deposits in 1897 and again in 1907-8, a line of investigation which has as yet not been further explored in Saddleshaw. Like all decaying industries, the Backstone Industry attracted Ammon Wrigley's interest. He had the foresight to have one of the last backstonemen photographed at work and his research provided a useful foundation for subsequent work. Naturally the cottage textile industry was a constant preoccupation of Ammon Wrigley's historical work. The visible remains of it were all around him and he had the percipience to record and have photographed the loomshop of the last Saddleshaw handloom weaver at Deanhead. The photograph appears in Songs of a Moorland Parish and it was partly through Ammon Wrigley that some of the machinery in that picture was preserved at Bankfield Museum in Halifax. On the subject of the early textile industry, local historians of the calibre of Ling-Roth and G. Crump corresponded with and were proud to learn from Ammon Wrigley.

Ammon Wrigley is a frustrating historian. All too often his sources are unidentified or only vaguely referenced, yet it is clear that much of his historical writing was as carefully researched as time and circumstance would allow. In an age when documentary research was difficult, before the formation of County Record Offices or the advent of the cheap photocopy, Ammon Wrigley made strenuous efforts to consult original source material. The most obvious examples are the wills and inventories instanced in the family histories he wrote on the Wrigleys, Gartside, Schofields and others.

Yet had Ammon Wrigley been just an antiquarian, we should not now be commemorating him. His genius lay in being able to express himself with precision and clarity, with force and with individuality. Of Rachael Wrigley he wrote:

"She ruled the house in a masterful way - and the three sons did as they did with once telling."

What an image of absolute obedience is conjoured up with that phrase ".... and the three sons did as they did with once telling." Ammon Wrigley's writing is studded with memorable, often beautiful images. He talks of "the fairies of memory" and of childhood days he says:

"Alas they go like sunbeams across hillside fields on a windy day."

How typical of Ammon Wrigley to use that homely image, and how right, for all his best imagery is firmly rooted in the landscape he loved. Talking of the time that has elapsed since the death of a friend, he says:

"Many snows have drifted down the Church moors since Joe o' Brebs was last seen in our lanes."

Just occasionally these images misfire. It is doubtful if the girl whose beauty is extolled in this comparison would have been flattered:

"Her skin was as fair as the cloudberry flower which grows ehere the waters come down from Wessenden Head."

It is even more doubtful whether she would have understood, and that is the point. Images are introduced to illuminate and when the comparison is made to something as rare as a Wessenden Head cloudberry they fail.

Those who have read 'A Moorland Schoolmistress' will be aware just how powerful a writer Ammon Wrigley could be. His output is uneven. No-one would give much for 'Buck Rabbits' or 'The Crucifixion', but there is no doubt that at his best Ammon Wrigley could produce a very moving short story. Of course he always said his verse was best, and he may be right, but the only way to test that is to hear it read by a good dialect reader.

Make no mistake however, Ammon Wrigley's writing was not the product of an unlettered or untutored imagination. He was a hard student who read widely from his earliest years, who analysed what he read and learnt from the best writers. He moves easily amongst the classic English writers, Shakespeare, Keats, Goldsmith, and the list could go on, but it is more surprising to find him quoting from the French free thinker Renan. He is well up with recent authors, Edward Fitzgerald and George Borrow, and cites more obscure sources such as Heywood's Collectiana or the works of the pioneering English botanist John Ray. Clearly for a working man in full time employment to aquire such a breadth of knowledge, and to use it not merely to produce a forced array of quotation but as a real source of experience argues great determination. Great determination was indeed a leading feature of Ammon Wrigley's character. His leterary and historical output was considerable. It would not have disgraced an intellectual on a private income - Ammon Wrigley produced it between shifts. It is a

triumph of total dedication to a high ideal, and that is one of the things Ammon Wrigley has to teach us. It was said of Martin Routh, President of Magdalen, that:

".... he survived from one generation to another to report the ways of the old to the new."

The remark might aptly be applied to Ammon Wrigley. He had always loved the past and drawn much of his inspiration from it. He was eighty four when he died so that he seemed to many to be the living embodiment of the vanished world he had so evocatively recorded. The world seemed to pass Ammon Wrigley by, even his christian name became an anachronism. Longevity was not the only factor here. Attitude of mind was equally important. Ammon Wrigley approached the twentieth century with caution and never embraced it with enthusiasm. He was happier in the early nineteenth century. So successfully did he personify the spirit of the old time handloom weaver and moor edge farmer that it is hard to believe that he was still tramping the moors when the first atom bomb was dropped. Yet it was not simply from the past that Ammon Wrigley drew his strength. His was a well of inspiration drawing deep from his native land. He knew Saddleworth as few men have ever known it. He spent all his life learning about an obscure Yorkshire township and was content that the hills of Saddleworth should bound his horizons. Particular as his studies were, they were not merely parochial. From this small corner of England he drew a rich experience and a wide humanity. He taught us that the world really is to be found in a grain of sand.

A.J. Petford.

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SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 1986

The first of the new season's programme was a talk by W.J. Smith on the origins of the small industrial town of Middleton on Oldham's western border. By delving into records of deeds and leases Mr Smith was able to show how the 17th century collection of properties such as Hopwood Hall, Tonge Hall, Alkrington, Langley Hall and Middleton Hall developed into an industrial town in the late 18th century. It was a lecture full of interest illustrated with slides of maps and old photographs with pictures of the few buildings of the period remaining today. I was surprised to learn that Middleton was an important centre for the weaving of silk. There is not enough space in a newsletter to do justice to the talk or the research and I hope that Mr Smith's findings may be the subject of a future Bulletin item.

20th Anniversary Celebrations

An ambitious programme of events to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Society gave many members an enjoyable and memorable weekend. The dinner at the Civic Hall was attended by nearly one hundred members and guests. Mr Roger Tanner proposed a toast to the Society to which the Chairman John Murray, who has just completed his 18th year of office, responded. David Chadderton, ex Vice Chairman, proposed a toast to the youngest founder member, Alan Petford, who responded. Stanley Broadbent, our Vice Chairman, proposed a toast to overseas members who support the Society so splendidly. A tribute to our oldest member, Colonel G.B. Howcroft, was made by Miss Clara Shaw who presented him with an embroidered crest of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment to which he belonged.

To everyone's enjoyment, Nell Buckley wound up the evenings proceedings with some poetical reminiscences in the style that only she can deliver. It was pleasing to see Mr and Mrs W. Connor among those present. It was Mr Connor who suggested that the Industrial Archaeology class he taught in 1966 should form an historical society. It was good too to see the Clarks from Scotland and the Barretts from Loughborough, staunch members in the early days.

On the Saturday afternoon about 50 people met at the Museum for a walk led by Julian Hunt and David Gartside. The weather was fine and fresh as we walked along the canal to Streethouse Lane, up the Husteads valley to Scouthead and across the fields to Lydgate where Julian explained the origin of the long straight field walls we had followed. We went down the slopes of Wharmton to the Farrer's Arms, to the canal at Frenches and back to the Museum. A very enjoyable walk taking about two hours. Try it if you missed it.

The social evening at the Museum was another occasion to reminisce with slides and photographs and more of Nell's wonderful dialect poetry, which should be recorded perhaps in the Bulletin before it is forgotten or lost. The event went on a bit longer than our usual meetings, finishing at 1.30a.m. Thanks are due to our stalwart Social Committee for all their hard work in organising the weekend, particularly to Stanley and Elsie Broadbent and Theresa Porisse.

Ammon Wrigley Anniversary, 31st August 1986

The Society marked the 40th Anniversary of the death of Ammon Wrigley at the end of August. I was on holiday at the time. From what I hear it was another memorable occasion. About 70 people met at the Museum and travelled by coach and car to Stanedge via Delph and Denshaw, so that Alan Petford could point out where Ammon Wrigley was born and where his parents worked. The energetic ones in the party then walked across the moor to the Dinnerstone where there is a plaque to the memory of the poet and where an address was given by Canon Airne.

After tea at the Museum, Alan gave an excellent talk on the life and times of Ammon Wrigley and the major influences on his work. This is reported elsewhere in this Bulletin. This was followed by recitations from Ammon Wrigley's works by Sam Seville, Clara Shaw and Harry Walne who, at 97, is still in good voice. So a good time was had by all, except me and those of you who, for whatever reason, missed the event. I hear that there were folk from the Wakefield Historical Society and the Lancashire Dialect Society so news of our activities gets around.

Future Programme

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| Tuesday November 11th,
Museum, 7.30p.m. | Lancashire at the Peak of its Prosperity. The Post-War Boom in the Cotton Industry, 1919-20.
Dr D.A. Farnie, Manchester University. |
| Tuesday December 2nd,
Museum, 7.30p.m. | Annual General Meeting
Nomination form at end of this Newsletter. |
| Friday December 12th,
Museum, 7.30p.m. | Members Slide Evening
This latter event is something of a social evening with sherry and mince pies and an opportunity for members to show slides, so if you would like five or ten minutes, let me know - Sadd. 3751. |

Summer Programme

The Committee had an extra meeting the other week to discuss the Summer Programme. The following events are planned for 1987.

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|------------|--|
| June 14th | Coach trip to Wigan to see the Wigan Pier Exhibition and to look round the town with Alan Petford. |
| July 15th | An evening walk around Quick led by Julian Hunt, starting at the White Hart, Lydgate. |
| July 25th | Coach trip to Hull and Beverley organised by Jim Carr. |
| August 8th | A longer walk, following the Shawmere boundary, led by David Latimer and myself. |

More about all these later, but make a note in your diary.

Festival 1987

1987 is Festival year and the Society is planning to make its contribution in the form of four one day schools on differing aspects of the Saddleworth scene. All very tentative at the moment, but the topics are likely to be Saddleworth in 1849; the growth of the local textile industry; agriculture and settlement; and the Romans in Saddleworth. In most cases the national background will be given by an outside speaker, the local circumstances will be discussed by a Society member, and each day will include field work in Saddleworth.

Archaeology Group Programme

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday in the month at 7.30p.m. for 8.30p.m. at the Cross Keys, Uppermill - 12th November, 10th December etc.

Saturday,
8th November
9.30 for 10.00a.m.
Manchester University

Our area of the Council for British Archaeology will be meeting at the University. Reports on archaeology in the North West will be given during the day, including two from Saddleworth. Ring Jim Carr, Sadd. 3612 if you want to go.

Wednesday,
12th November
Cross Keys

The Huddersfield Archaeology Society will be leading the discussion on "New Discoveries on Pule Hill and Beyond".

Music at the Gallery

Stanley Broadbent had a great idea. How about music at the Museum Gallery? There have already been two Jazz Nights and a third is to follow on Saturday 15th November. Stanley acts quickly!

Chairs

From the proceeds of the Jazz Nights and with the cooperation of the Museum Committee who provided 50% of the cost, 50 new chairs have been purchased. Let's hope that listening to lectures will be more comfortable from now on. Congratulations Stanley!

Dobcross Trail

I understand that the Dobcross Trail is now at the printers and will be available shortly. A fully revised edition of the Grasscroft trail is also at an advanced stage.

Donations

Two of our overseas members have sent donations this year. Mrs. Esther Shaw Lawn of California sent us 100 dollars in May and Mrs Mary Martin of Texas gave us 150 dollars in September. These are really generous gifts which are much appreciated.

Membership

Our total membership today is 345. New members who have joined since the Spring are listed over the page.

Mr. & Mrs. J.R. Broome, Steyning,
Mr. & Mrs. W.O. Bradley, Delph,
Mr. T. Dawson, Greenfield,
Mr. D. Scholes, Grotton,
Mrs. S.M. Cunningham, Uppermill,
Mr. & Mrs. R.A. Shatwell, Aldershot,
Mrs. L. Cooper, Solihull,
Mr. R. Wells, Greenfield,
Miss J.M. Danby, Moston,

Mr. & Mrs. N. McIntock, Denshaw,
Mr. & Mrs. J. Sykes, Delph,
Mrs. M.K. Beard, Canterbury,
Mr. & Mrs. D.C. Marler, Dobcross,
Mrs. C. Hepworth, Ashton-under-Lyne,
Mr. J.P. Morison, Twickenham,
Mr. & Mrs. P.P. Haines, Greenfield.

It was pleasing to meet Mrs. Cooper and Mr. Morison at the 20th Anniversary weekend.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Society is to be held on Tuesday 2nd December at the Museum. There is a nomination form at the end of this newsletter.

Kenworthy Lecture

The W.E.A. Kenworthy Lecture is to be held on Monday 8th December in the Common Room at the Adult Education Centre at Saddleworth School. It will be given by Mr. Eric Watson and is entitled "The Clockwork of the Heavens, a look at timekeeping before clocks". Admission is free.

This seems to be an extremely long newsletter but its purpose is to inform the whole membership of what is happening and what has happened, as well as to be a record for the future. I hope it does both.

J.G. Parry.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY

DECEMBER 2nd 1986, at the Museum, 7.30 p.m.

Nominations are invited for the post of:-

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Treasurer

Committee Members

If you wish to nominate anyone to one of these posts, please obtain his/her consent beforehand. Forward your nominations to the Secretary, Mrs. B. Booth, Ceann, Friezland Lane, Greenfield, Oldham OL3 7EU to reach her before the 30th November 1986.