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MEMORIES AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CASTLESHAW VALLEY

In 1929-30 I was sent for health reasons to the Castleshaw Open Air School. Some two extensions have been built since but the original building can easily be seen at the front of the house. There was residential accommodation for 22 girls in three dormitories. The resident staff were Matron, Miss Whitehead, who ran the centre on military lines and discipline; Nurse White who looked after our personal care; Miss Brady, a general helper, Mrs. Dronsfield and Mary were Cook and Assistant Cook and lived at nearby Croft House. Mr. Wood looked after the central heating stove which burned coke.

In the Chalet School Room Mrs. Williamson was our teacher who came Monday to Friday and lived at Castlehill Cote near the Upper Reservoir as her husband was the waterman. Teaching was done in groups of four depending on age and ability as we ranged from 6 years to 14 years. We were taught English Language, Arithmetic, History, Geography, German and Nature Observations, e.g. birds nests and eggs, flowers and trees. Crafts were drawing, raffia work, needlework and knitting. The games we played were rounders, hide and seek, whip and top, hopscotch and a sort of tennis.

Everybody had domestic jobs at 9 years old. I helped with the washing up after meals. Others set the tables, cleared up afterwards and swept the floor - being near to a lot of fields we occasionally got field mice in the house. Wednesday morning our English lesson was writing a letter home. One was written on the blackboard for the younger ones to print, but those who could write well did their own under supervision. Two of the older girls took the letters to Delph Post Office walking by the field paths.

Meals were on a weekly rota, the food plentiful but not much variety. Monday was boiled beef and carrots, Wednesday potato pie and Friday fish. These dishes I well remember. On Sunday morning before breakfast we all had to drink an egg cup full of diluted Epsom salts to keep our bowels open.

Our uniform was all navy blue, skirts or gym-slips, jerseys in winter, blouses in summer. Our overalls at meals were tabard style. The underwear was cream woollen vests and navy knickers. We must have looked a drab lot with black woollen stockings and shoes. We made our own beds and kept our lockers and bedrooms tidy. Friday was clean clothes and clean bedding day.

Our walks were to the Roman Camp, Bleak Hey Nook, Harrop Edge and to the top road between Heights Church and Broadhead Noddle which we were told was a pack horse route to Marsden. We were taken to Church either by Millcroft Lane and Grange to Heights or to Delph in winter. At Heights Church they had the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. Before we went to Church with Miss White we were inspected by Matron for clean necks and clean shoes. Often one of our neighbours from Clarksfield was at Church, a Mrs. Mellor, whose brother had a business in Delph. Our lighting was by oil lamps which had to be trimmed at the wick point and refilled with paraffin.

As a 'thank you' to the people of Delph we gave a concert in Delph Independent Sunday School. A few were dressed in yellow and green crepe paper as daffodils and danced to Mendelsohn's 'Spring Song'. One of the girls sang 'My Blue Heaven'.

In the month of March I marvelled at the new-born lambs so small and leggy but not needing to be taught how to feed. Other lambs who were orphaned were bottle fed but just as greedy. In the summer after haymaking we saw sheep being sheared of their wool at Wood Farm. In April we looked for birds' eggs and nests, particularly of Blackbirds, Swifts and Plovers. May was made brighter by King Cups or Marsh Marigolds in the brook.

My memories of Whit-Friday in Delph are very clear. We joined the churches to walk round the villages with the banners and the brass bands played for the hymns. At lunch time we went to a Sunday School and we all had potato pie and red cabbage. In the afternoon we joined in sports for the children. Besides ordinary running there was a three legged race and an egg and spoon race. Later there was a Yorkshire high tea with cold meats, thin jelly and cakes - lovely.

At Christmas, presents were given by local people. I remember the Wilbys who lived at Stoneswood and the 'Daily Despatch Cinderella Fund' gave books. I got one of Charles Dickens' novels as I moved from fairy stories to classic's in my reading.

I know it rained a lot because we had our own rain gauge. There was a lot of snow for snowballs and snowmen and we were cut off for a few days. Visits by relatives were fortnightly on Saturdays. My parents never missed once in 12 months. Travel was by train from Clegg Street Station to Delph. The omnibus came from Oldham via Scouthead but it always had to stop at the 'Three Crowns Inn' to refill the radiator which invariably boiled climbing Austerlands brow. All sweets and fruit had to be handed to Matron who shared them out over the two weeks. Pocket money was recorded for stamps etc.

There was a filter house for the reservoir - the site is now surrounded by trees. Mr. Jones, one of the watermen who lived at Wood Barn, was in charge and the waterworks fish hatchery was nearby. The Wharton family lived at Wood Farm. We had lots of official visitors like the Assistant Medical Officer or Dr. Graham, School Dentist, but if we needed treatment we were taken to Gower Street Clinic at some convenient date by Miss White on the Delph Donkey. We were on the list for various observation visits. We saw the Education Committee, the Director and other staff like accountants and the Waterworks Committee on their annual inspection, not to mention nurses and student nurses from the Oldham Royal Infirmary.

I would like to know more about the Castleshaw Camp School before 1916 when it was given to Oldham by Mrs. Sarah Lees. Mr. Mike Green is Head Teacher at the Castleshaw Centre today and is equally interested in the history of the building.

Edith Ormerod.

NEW FINDS AT CASTLESHAW ROMAN FORTS



The Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit has been excavating at the Roman Forts at Castleshaw since 1984, and under Dave Start their brief is to return the site to its former appearance before digs began at the end of last century.

Archaeologists working at the Castleshaw Roman Forts Project have long been frustrated by the high acidity of the soil, which has almost dissolved some metal objects, especially bronze coins, and even pottery and tile have been affected. However, a stroke of fortune, a keen excavator's eye and the skill of the Museum's conservators have presented us with an impression, a mould, a mirror-image of a 35 mm. diameter bronze coin long after any actual metal has been leached away.

Looking at the image in a mirror we can make out most of the imprint of a Roman coin - a bronze sestertertius on the obverse side. A coin like this was actually struck from "orichalcum" - four parts copper to one part zinc. Four sestertertii or sesterces were worth one silver denarius (the D for old pennies) a soldier's pay at that time would be 225 denarii per annum.

Inset is an artistic reconstruction of the coin featuring the profile of the Emperor Vespasian. The inscription starting from 6 o'clock is as follows:

IMP (CA)ES VESPAS(IAN) AVG P M (TR P PP) COS III

this being the commonest form of obverse legend for this denomination.
In full it would read:

IMPERATOR CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVGVSTVS PONTIFEX MAXIMVS TRIBVNICIA POTESTATE
PATER PATRIAE CONSVL III

(U = V in inscriptions)

IMPERATOR	Emperor, Supreme Commander.
CAESAR	The Caesar, a title inherited from Julius Caesar, often given to the heir to the throne. It came to modern times in the titles Kaiser, Czar, Tsar and Shah.
AVGVSTVS	Assumed first by Octavian, when he became the first Emperor and then by succeeding Emperors.
PONTIFEX MAXIMVS	Chief Priest.
TRIBVNICIAE POTESTATE	With Tribunician Power - tribunes were created in the Republic to protect the rights of the 'plebs' or lower classes against the aristocrats.
PATER PATRIAE	Father of his Country.
CONSVL III	Consul for the third time, chief magistrate, originally in pairs, elected annually and their names were used as dates for the year by Roman historians. However, under Vespasian at least five pairs held office each year. This last mark tells us the date is likely to be <u>A.D.71</u> which fits well with Castleshaw's date range of A.D.80 - 120.

If the reverse had survived, we would probably have seen the representation of a deity such as Mars, Minerva, Roma, Fortune, Peace or Hope.

Tutus Flavius Vespasianus was born on 17th November, A.D.9. at Falacrina, the second son of a tax official. Despite his humble beginnings, he soon made his mark in the array and his skill and powers of leadership ensured his promotion.

In A.D. 43. the Emperor Claudius invaded Britain with four legions, under Aulus Plautius, landing at Richborough and pushing north to Colchester, which he made his headquarters. Vespasian was in command of the Second Legion (Legio Secunda Augusta) whose task was then to drive south-west, supported by other south coast landings. He is celebrated for his assault and capture of a number of "oppida", Iron Age Hillforts of which the classic examples of Maiden Castle and Hod Hill are still to be seen in Dorset. History tells us "he fought thirty battles, subjugated two warlike tribes and captured more than twenty hillforts besides the entire Isle of Wight (Vectis).

In A.D. 67. the Emperor Nero sent him to put down the Jewish Revolt and he carried this out successfully even in the confused period after the Emperor's suicide.

Nero's death led to Civil War and A.D. 69-70, "The Year of the Four Emperors", when Galba, Otho and Vitellius each assumed the purple for a very short time before their death.

On 1st July, A.D.69, the legions at Alexandria declared Vespasian Emperor, followed immediately by the legions on the Danube, who invaded Italy to defeat Vitellius at Cremona. Vespasian reached Rome in A.D.70, and set about the task of reconstruction. He succeeded in stabilising the Empire under just and industrious rule. He died on 24th June, A.D. 79, at Reate (Rieti) and was duly deified by decree of the Senate.

He gave his name to the "Flavian" dynasty - the Flavian Amphitheatre, more usually known as the Colosseum was begun by Vespasian and completed by his sons Titus and Domitian. Over 50 metres high, it covered an elliptical area 188 by 156 metres. Officially opened in A.D.80, it could hold about 70,000 spectators.

Up to this year nobody has been sure which auxiliary unit of the Roman army formed the garrison at Castleshaw because most of the inscriptions on tiles found on the site read simply COH BR. The first part means COHORT and the BR, if followed by A would have meant the troops came from Braga in Portugal. However, an exciting discovery this year of a tile stamp showing part of a Roman numeral and BRE confirm that the unit came from a tribe called BREUCI who lived in the Roman Province of Pannonia.

We know that auxiliary establishments produced their own tiles and at the kilns at Grimescar near Huddersfield were found tiles stamped COHORS 1111 BREUCORVM. These have also been found at the fort at Slack just off the M62 under the Outlane Golf Course. Usually they are abbreviated to COH 1111 BRE (or just BR).

Five tribes from Pannonia raised Auxiliary units and the historian J.B.Bury claimed "....this was the best nursery in the Empire for good fighting men." Altogether a series of eight Cohorts was raised from the Breuci and although we cannot number the one at Castleshaw for certain as the Fourth, there is none mentioned elsewhere in Britain. The Fourth Cohort probably served in Germany before its arrival in Britain as part of the Emperor Claudius's invasion force in A.D.43.

The first definite record in the province of Britannia is on a diploma of A.D.122: diplomas were awarded to auxiliaries for long service or at the end of their service in the Roman army and granted Roman citizenship - a great privilege - among other rewards. The Fourth Cohort of the Breuci is securely dated in building work at Bowes during the reign of Emperor Hadrian. Under the Emperor Julius Severus (193 - 211) they are also recorded at a building at Bowes. In the third century the unit is inscribed on an altar and on tiles at Eboracaster.

In Latin literature too we find the Breuci mentioned in Pliny 3, 25, 28 * 147, in Suetonius, "Life of Tiberius" chapter 9, and in the inscriptions Orelli 126; 2248. Searching for the Breuci and Pannonia on a map of the Roman Empire and comparing it with a modern map of Europe, we find that the tribe lived by the River Sava, a tributary of the River Danube, and that Pannonia was south and west of the Danube.

But what other connection has this tribe, distant in time and place, got to do with Oldham? If you look for the modern River Sava on the map, you find it is in Yugoslavia, and nearby you will find there is a familiar nameKRANJ! History really does repeat itself. The tile in question is part of a Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit exhibition called "From Cladius to Clogs" now touring Oldham.

In June and July 1988 the Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill, will be mounting a major exhibition about the Romans at Castleshaw.

Jim Carr

A GODLY PREACHING MINISTER

John Wild, Minister of Saddleworth, 1583 - 1592

The Elizabethan church was deeply divided between moderates who thought that the reformation had gone far enough and puritans who, lamenting that the state church was 'but halfy reformed', wished to pursue the path of reformation still further. They wished to establish an ecclesiastical structure based on that of Geneva or other of 'the best reformed churches'. Strangely enough between moderates and puritan there was a good deal of theological agreement, both for the most part happily subscribed to the main tenets of Calvinist theology, what they disagreed about was church organisation. The moderates argued that reform of doctrine was sufficient and that the episcopal structure, the basic shape of the liturgy and certain vestments could all be adapted from the old Catholic Church. This was the essence of the Anglican via media tenaciously pursued by Elizabeth and most of her bishops. The puritans on the other hand argued that since the bible did not specify an episcopate, or a set liturgy or ecclesiastical vestments these 'rags of popery' should be abolished and the work of reformation thereby completed. Puritanism was particularly strong in the Pennines and Saddleworth seems to have experienced all the benefits of a puritan ministry towards the end of the sixteenth century.

In the last days of the year 1592 John Wild, Minister of Saddleworth, died. Although the nine years of his incumbency are veiled in obscurity his death is remarkably well documented due to the fortunate survival of both his will and his inventory. From these we can deduce much about the man and the style of his ministry.

Wild was one of a group of puritan ministers appointed to the constituent chapelries of the parish of Rochdale by the famous puritan Vicar, Richard Midgley. 2. During his thirty four year incumbency of Rochdale, Midgley did his best to establish puritanism on a sure footing in the parish. As vicar he had the right to present to the dependant chapelries and whenever he made appointments he nominated puritans. Thus William Greaves was appointed to Littleborough in 1572, John Wild to Saddleworth in 1583, Lawrence Hey to Milnrow in 1587 and Gilbert Ashley to Todmorden in 1590.

In his will John Wild showed a similar concern to perpetuate puritan teaching for he gave the benefit of a lease,

"to a godley preacher to be provided and nominated
to succeed me in my roome by Mr. Midglye and
Mr. Hunt while they lyve and after their death at
the discretion of the best disposed in religion in the
parish of Saddleworthe." 3.

The Mr. Hunt mentioned here was the Rev. Thomas Hunt, M.A., first master of Oldham Grammar School and curate of Oldham from 1580 to 1611. 4. Like Richard Midgley he had frequently been brought before the ecclesiastical courts for the standard puritan misdemeanours; failing to wear a surplice or refusing to follow the liturgy as set out in the Book of Common Prayer.

In stipulating that his successor should be nominated by Hunt and Midgley Wild was ensuring that the parish would continue to have a minister of impeccable puritan pedigree. Wild was not disappointed. When a new curate was eventually nominated in 1603 John Morris sometime curate of Ashton-under-Lyne was chosen. 5. His puritanism is sufficiently attested by that fact that he was one of that charmed circle of Lancashire puritans who benefitted from the legacies of John Buckley., fellow of Manchester College. 6. Under the terms of Buckley's will Morris received " Luther his ennavations uppon the Epistles and Gospells".

Education was the cornerstone of English puritanism. Only education could produce the learned sermon so beloved of the puritans. Only education could equip the puritan with the necessary academic ammunition to continue the two front war against moderates within the State Church and Catholics without. In this context it comes as no surprise to learn that Hunt was also a schoolmaster or that Midgley was instrumental in mobilising local support for the foundation of Rochdale Grammar School in 1565. John Wild's concern for education was perhaps more limited but is clearly evident from his will. One of the most important provision of Wild's will was that his successor should pay,

"....unto Ottiwell Wild my younger brother xx li. of good and lawful money of England to the sole and onlye use of John Wild his sonne my nepye and godsonne the which I will have occuyped to his best use for his education in learning both in the contry and at one of the universyties either Cambridge or Oxford."

We do not know how or if Wild's intention was carried out but there is no evidence that John Wild the younger ever went up to either university. He did, however, become a clergyman, which suggested he at least attended a Grammar School, and ultimately became curate of Milnrow. Here he demonstrated himself, according to Radcliffe, a follower of school which would clearly have disappointed his puritan uncle.. 7.

Of the educational attainments of John Wild "Minister of the ghospell of Jesus Christ at Saddleworth" it is difficult to judge. He does not appear to have been a university graduate but then as far as we can discover neither does Midgley of Rochdale and both would have reached university age before the great expansion of Oxford and Cambridge in the late 16th century. 8. In his inventory Wild's books are valued at sixteen shillings which perhaps represented half-a-dozen books, not an insignificant number in an age when eighty books were reckoned to form an exceptionally large personal library. 9. Wild gave his bible to one Edward Marsland and all his other books to Robert Broadbent, son of James Broadbent who may have been a member of the Broadbent family who provided the Parish Clerk for Saddleworth Church until 1820. 10.

Wild ammounced his adherence to the protestant doctrine of salvation by faith in the preamble of his will,

"I bequeth my soule to almightie god that gave it in full assurance of salvation by the blood of Christ Jesus only".

The phraseology of puritanism runs right through the document:

'godly preaching minister' means a puritan clergyman and 'the best disposed in religion in the parish of Saddleworth' implies the puritans of Saddleworth. When Wild speaks of his 'zeal of the better promoting of Godes glory' he is indicating his support for the propagation of puritan doctrine. These phrases make clear Wild's general religious position but it is difficult to be certain where exactly he stood within the spectrum of puritanism. What few indicators there are incline us to think that he was a moderate. His statement about salvation by faith is a simple one such as even a moderate Lutheran could have subscribed to; there is no hint of any Calvinistic doctrine of election or reprobation. Similarly it is interesting that Wild had a godson. Some hard line puritans discounted the whole concept of sponsorship by godparents at baptism others compromised by only allowing family relations to act in that capacity, perhaps Wild fell into this category. 11. So far as we know he was never brought before an ecclesiastical court for any puritan failings but this could simply be explained by the fact that it was vicars and rectors rather than curates who were made examples of.

In his will Wild apostrophised Sir John Byrom, Lord of the Manor of Rochdale, as "a special favourer of religion". Like most puritans of his day Wild was prepared to flatter the gentry and nobility in the hope of, or in return for, their protection. This was natural. Puritans were constantly under attack from the Elizabethan episcopate and always in need of whatever lay protection they could get. What protection Sir John Byrom offered is not clear; as holder of the rectoral tithes of Rochdale he seems to have been rather mean, withholding the stipends of some of the curates for a period. 12. However avarice and a willingness to protect puritans are not necessarily mutually exclusive and it may be due to Byrom's protection that Midgley enjoyed a long and relatively undisturbed puritan ministry at Rochdale. Clearly Wild was being no more than prudent in flattering Byrom and calling on him

"to be an effectual means for the accomplishment
of this my good meaning to the better performance
of godes glorye at Saddleworth".

If John Wild did marry his wife predeceased him and bore him no children for his will only mentions his three borthers, one brother-in-law and his nephew. Apart from his legacies to these relations all the rest of Wild's worldly goods seem to have been given to parishioners or friends. a few examples will make clear the kind of legacies Wild left.

"Item I give to Margaret Bradburye a heffer with
a white specke on the back".

"Item I further give and bequeath to William Knight
one Edward shilling". 13.

"Item I give and bequeath to Thomas Cheetam one
chaffe bedd two blankettes and cloth to make a paire
of breaches."

"Item I give to William Farrang all my turfes."

These legacies may have been small and practical but the recipients were not regarded by Wild as poor. For the "pure of the parish" he gave:

"One oxe sturke which I will to be sold and the money to be given to the pure aforesayd".

What of the wealth and standard of John Wild himself ? His inventory lists goods to the value of £66.14.4d. which does not compare very favourably with an average of £120 for clerical inventories in the prosperous county of Lincolnshire in the 1590's. 14. We would expect Wild to be a relatively poor clergyman since Saddleworth was only a chapelry nor a rectory or vicarage in its own right. Like many of the poorer clergy in this period Wild obviously farmed the glebeland himself. At his death he had three heifers and one ox stirk, corn and hay worth £10, manure valued at 3s. 4d., two sleds and other agricultural tackle. In all agricultural stock represented almost a third in value of Wild's goods as listed in his inventory.

In the context of late sixteenth century Saddleworth society however Wild was certainly not a poor man. Seventeen Saddleworth inventories survive from the sixteenth century covering the period 1577 to 1599 and only two are worth more than that of John Wild. The average value is just over £40 with the poorest standing at just £5.15.8d. and the most prosperous being valued at £100.2.10d. Wild came of the well established family of that name which resided at Coleshaw in Oldham so he may have had family wealth as well as his stipend to fall back on. Certainly his extensive wardrobe containing such luxury items as a "best carfy doublett" and proper riding equipment, "a paire of bootes, bootehose and spures" suggest a degree of prosperity above the norm for Saddleworth at this period.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Lancashire County Record Office, Wills proved at Chester. A transcription of another copy is also printed in J. Radcliffe, The Parish Registers of St. Chad, Saddleworth, 1613 - 1765, 1887, p. 419 - 20.
2. For Richard Midgley see F.R. Raines, The Vicars of Rochdale, Part 1, Chetham Society, New Series, Vol.1. 1883, pp. 42-67.
3. Although the Vicar of Rochdale claimed, and usually seems to have exercised, his right of nomination to Saddleworth there was in fact some uncertainty as to where the right of nomination really lay and this seems to be reflected by Wild in his provisions for appointing his successor. In the eighteenth century the parishioners claimed the right to present to the living. J. Radcliffe, Op. cit. p. 422.
4. H. Bateson and H.B. Shaw, A Brief History of Oldham Grammar School and the Hulme Grammar School, Oldham. 1961, p.14.
5. J. Radcliffe, Op.cit. p.420.
6. J. Radcliffe, ibid. and R.C. Richardson, Puritanism in North West England, 1972, p.56.

7. J. Radcliffe, *Op.cit.* p. 420.
8. In spite of F.R. Raines' assertion that Midgley was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, he appears to have been a graduate neither of Oxford nor Cambridge. Similarly Wild does not appear in the records of either University, see J. Foster *Alumni Oxoniensis, 1500 - 1714*, Vols. 1 - 4, 1891, and J. Verr and J.A. Verr, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis, Part 1*, Vols. 1 - 4, 1927.
9. R.C. Richardson, *Op. cit.*, p.56.
10. J. Radcliffe, *The Parish Registers of St. Chad, Saddleworth, 1751 - 1800*, 1891, pp. 550 - 2.
11. P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 1967, p. 369.
12. F.R. Raines, *Op.cit.*, p. 43.
13. In 1550 some shillings of only about 33% silver content were issued by Edward VI's mints but otherwise all shillings from 1549 to 1601 had a 50% silver content. In 1559 these were countermarked to indicate that they were made of base silver and allowed to circulate at reduced value, so presumably an Edward Shilling is one of these. See H.A. Seaby, ed., *Standard Catalogue of British Coins*, 2nd Edition, 1963-4, pp. 116, 126, 132.
14. F.W. Brooks, "The Social Position of the parson in the Sixteenth Century" in *Journal of the British Archeological Association*, 3rd Series, Vol. X. 1945-7 pp. 23-37.

METHODISM IN SADDLEWORTH

In the middle of the 18th Century the Methodist movement had already begun although John Wesley, an ordained priest of the Church of England, never meant to break away from it but felt the need to spread the Gospel in areas where manufacturing industry and the growing population were apparently being neglected. When the Reverend John Heginbottom, incumbent of St. Chad's died in 1771 it is claimed by the author of the Parish Registers that there was not a Dissenter in the Parish despite the somewhat eccentric behaviour of this priest. Change was already on the way. The Independent Chapel in Delph had been built in 1746 and Heights Chapel at Friarmere quickly followed in 1768.

The next two incumbents of St. Chad's, the Reverend Charles Podmore (1771-1792) and the Reverend Charles Zouch (1792-1801) did little to improve the image of the established Church. Therefore, with alternative places of worship being far distant in those days - Rochdale 8 miles, Halifax 15 miles, Meltham 9 miles, Ashton 7 miles and Oldham only 5 miles and Marsden 6 miles could be reached by turnpike road, it was not surprising that when Methodist preachers appeared they were welcomed. A Mr. Matthew Mayer of Stockport preached the first Methodist sermon in a hired room in Millgate in 1770. Nine years later the Reverend Benson was the first ordained minister to preach there.

John Wesley himself came from Rochdale on Friday, 7th April 1780. He records in his diary: 'I went to Delph, a little village upon the mountains where a remarkable work of God is just broke out. I was just set down when the minister sent me word I was to welcome to preach in his Church. On hearing this many people walked thither near a mile from the town but in ten minutes he sent me word his mind was changed. We knew not what to do till the trustees of the independent meeting offered us the use of their house. It was quickly filled and truly God bore witness to his word. In the evening I preached in Huddersfield'. The parson who changed his mind about allowing Wesley to use his premises was the Reverend John Buckley. Amon Wrigley remarks in Saddleworth Chronological Notes that 'the villagers must have been on their best behaviour and did not clog him'.

In 1780 the Delph people made an application to the Methodist Conference to build a Chapel which was above two cottages in Millgate where the present Library and Little Theatre now stand. In May 1781 a Mr. Dalton opened the Methodist Preaching House in Delph and the text of his sermon was Isaiah V, verse 14: 'Therefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it.' We are not told how the congregation received it. The Wesleyans did not retain the building long. The Primitive Methodists took it over and then the Methodist New Connexion.

The established Church of England were quickly aware of the progress of the Nonconformists in the district and opened new chapels at Dobcross (Holy Trinity) in 1787 and at Lydgate (St. Annes) in 1788.

Meanwhile, in 1786 a Wesleyan Sunday School was set up at Sandbed and plans were afoot for a new Chapel behind the Rose and Crown on the present site. Subscriptions were collected and the building was opened in 1801 after applications had been made to the Bishop of Chester for a licence for the preaching house. The first Trustees were named in 1803. In the early days people set out from all over Saddleworth taking packed meals for the day. Delph was in the Oldham Circuit and preachers came over on Saturday when they were planned to preach on the Sunday - this despite the fact that the Austerlands - Wakefield Turnpike Road passing though Delph was begun in 1759 !

Delph was decalared a Circuit in 1828 and the Reverend W.W. Stamp was the first minister. Later on he became the President of the Methodist Conference.

In Uppermill the first Independent Chapel was Ebenezer built in 1807 and rebuilt in 1872. This building now houses the Catholic Church. John Avison and his nephew, Johnathan, were instrumental in starting a second Methodist Chapel in Saddleworth by giving land for a chapel, school and burial ground in a prime site in Uppermill Square. I take this gift to mean handing over leases because the Chapel acquired the freehold from the Vicar of Meltham two years ago.. The Chapel was begun in 1811 but was left unfinished for lack of funds in 1813 when the walls and roof had been completed. David Baraclough and Johnathan Avison went to Holmfirth soliciting gifts and were denounced as imposters. They were arrested but released after they had established their identities. This affair did no great harm because the Holmfirth people were sorry for what had happened and contributed generously. In 1814 the Uppermill Wesleyan Methodists established a Sunday School, upstaging the Independent Chapel by four years. Delph built a Wesleyan Sunday School in 1816 which they rebuilt in 1873. In 1818 the Methodist Conference established a fund for the Relief of Distressed Chapels. Uppermill contributed one guinea and received nine in return. The Uppermill Chapel was licensed for marriages in 1844. Three years later the three Uppermill Churches began to hold Walks on Whit Friday.

In 1850 John Avison offered a home for the minister in Uppermill - a house at present occupied by E.M.Taylor, Solicitor. This move made Uppermill the centre of the Circuit, much to the chagrin of the Delph people. The first Superintendent was the Reverend John Raby who had been a missionary in Fiji.

The Sunday School now became a Day School of which John Avison's nephew became Master - a post he held for 30 years. Further developments in Uppermill were the introduction of gas lighting in 1857, a new day school in 1872 and a pipe organ in 1876. Obviously the financial plight of the early years was behind the Uppermill Church for in 1900 a new manse was built in Carr Lane and by 1910 a decision was taken to build a new Chapel to replace the original one which had a clock. The new Church was to have a spire and was financed by a Grand Bazar in 1911. The new building was opened in 1912.

Meanwhile there had been further developments in Delph. A Primitive Methodist School was opened in 1864 and a Chapel followed in 1873 built near the present car park opposite the Little Theatre. The original Wesleyan Chapel in Gartside Street was burned down in 1894 but was rapidly replaced due to the generosity of the Mallalieu family.

In Greenfield the first Methodist Chapel was set up where St. Mary's School now stands, in 1843. At the time there was no Anglican Church in Greenfield, Friezland being built in 1850 and St. Mary's in 1874. The Methodists soon acquired a prime site in the middle of the village and the present Chapel and Sunday School opened their doors in 1883.

The fourth Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was opened near the Loom Works in Diggle in 1864 and is named Wrigley Mill. The present site saw the erection of a Chapel and School in 1868. The Wrigley Mill people celebrated their Golden Jubilee with a general committee of 74 in 1914.

The four Churches constituted the Saddleworth Circuit until 1962 when the two Churches in Lees and another in Roundthorn were added and the name was changed to Saddleworth and Lees. The new amalgamation only lasted for 12 years and the Saddleworth Churches now form part of an Oldham Circuit of 17 Churches.

Allan Bradbury

December 1987.

RELIGION IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY: THE CASE OF OLDHAM AND SADDLEWORTH
(1780-1865) OXFORD UNIVERSITY Ph D THESIS 1987 M A SMITH

George Whittaker of Racefield farm Chadderton kept a diary in the mid-nineteenth century. He records that in March 1841 the "celebrated play of Wat Tyler was performed by the amateurs of Chadderton at Healds Green School". This was "the first performance of its kind to take place in Chadderton. The audience was very numerous in spite of the ranting Methodists who did all in their power to oppose the Act." On Thursday, April 29th, the school door "was locked up by a man sent by John Haigh.... but....was broken open as soon as he went away. A meeting was held that night at the school when it was clearly proved that the ranting Methodists had been to John Haigh and prevailed on him to lock it up, and let it to them at two pounds a year, with a view to get it into their own hands...." On the evening of Wednesday October 6th, farmer George records, "the ranting Methodists and the band both met at the school; the Methodists were praying at one end, and the band was playing at the other, when someone threw a stone through the window, which struck John Taylor on the knee. It was supposed to be the work of the Ranters, they being a very stupid bigoted set of men!"

It is with such local incidents, vividly described by the Chadderton diarist, and the questions they raise, that this most valuable and interesting thesis is concerned. How important was local involvement in the political radicalism and Chartism of which Southey's play 'Wat Tyler' was the symbol? What contribution did the Methodist and other christian churches make to local society? How did they respond to the alternative culture symbolised by the Healds Green band? How deep seated was conflict in our town, and how real the sense of community?

We are reminded of the importance of our local history and that we should value it more. Have we forgotten that a hundred years ago Shaw claimed to have more millionaires per square mile than anywhere else on earth, that this was the cotton spinning town par excellence, the centre of a world-wide empire? "If anyone asked me to name a town in which to study industrial life in England I should unhesitatingly say Oldham", wrote Arthur Shadwell in 1906, and it is this which justifies its choice for this piece of research. Oldham and Saddleworth typified industrialisation in both urban and rural forms; Oldham has become the subject of learned debate, following John Foster's book, Class Struggle and Industrial Revolution (1974), yet its religious history has not previously been given proper attention.

Mr Smith challenges the prevailing gloomy view of nineteenth century church attendance, and the accompanying picture of a rootless proletariat disorientated by the collapse of pre-industrial community life and suffering 'anomie' in an unfamiliar urban environment, which has been propounded by Foster, and by A D Gilbert in his Religion and Society in Industrial England (1976). Smith emphasises the importance of a continuing patchwork of small communities with strong local identities. Here anyone who knows Oldham well will feel that he is making a valid and important point. His account brings to life a central aspect of local society, well illustrated by the aforementioned village of Healds Green Chadderton.

He goes on to describe how the churches responded to the possibility that in these industrial and predominantly working class communities a culture might develop in which the activities of organised religion were marginalised. He gives a detailed, informative and fascinating account of an impressive church response, which is of great value to anyone interested in understanding this formative and creative period of religious life in the town. The picture is of an aggressive, self-confident, evangelical consensus, uniting the different denominations, clear about its role in

bringing the gospel to all sections of the local communities, and in his view so successful in doing this, that a surprisingly high proportion of working class people were influenced by the christian faith. A church-based christian culture was established. He emphasises the sharing of an evangelical theology among the committed and energetic clergy who led this ecclesiastical onslaught. We come to admire these leaders and sympathise with those burnt-out by overwork: we smile ruefully at the obstacles presented to local initiatives by the church structures (plus ~~ca~~ change....) and wish that we could know more about the faith and involvement of lay people. We realise that today's churches, when many of them unite for a 'New Life for Oldham' Festival in the 1980s - evangelical and clergy-led - are the little-changed (but less self-confident and significant?) descendants of their nineteenth century forebears.

Smith's emphasis on supra-denominational church unity and localised communities plays down the element of conflict in local churches and society. Yet conflict there certainly was, as George Whittaker observed. Anglican priest Robert Dunne, coming to St Matthew's Chadderton in 1844, viewed his parishioners as heathen barbarians, despite a Methodist presence there since 1755 when John Wesley preached on Chadderton Heights. We think also of the later anti-Catholic and anti-Irish riots in the town, which testified to a religious and racial prejudice which is still one of the least welcome characteristics of local life.

It is unfortunate that the writer did not investigate more fully the significance of political radicalism and of Chartism. Dorothy Thompson's book The Chartists (1984) makes clear their importance in places like Oldham. The reader of Ben Brierley's 'Home Memories', stimulated by his picture of working people avidly reading O'Connor's 'Northern Star' newspaper, wants to learn more about this search for values which challenged nineteenth century 'market' capitalism. As we watch the parties of the centre and left struggling to convince the nation in 1988 that there might be an alternative to Thatcherism, we realise the fundamental importance of the political conflict enacted locally in the 1840s.

It is here that we come to the weakest part of Mr Smith's thesis; for he does not investigate at all the attitude of the churches to these political movements. While he accepts Foster's description of the appalling working and living conditions endured by much of the local population between 1780 and 1865, he does not see these social and political circumstances as central and fundamental for an assessment of the quality of christian response made by the churches. We learn nothing of possible nineteenth century successors of the minister of Dob Lane Chapel Failsworth, who as early as 1757 preached two sermons "on the great sin and danger of oppression". This question of the relationship between politics, social change and the christian faith continues to be a crucial one for the churches. Those for whom the Bishop of Durham is a hero rather than a villain would love to learn more about undiscovered radical christians of earlier times!

The reluctance of the church to challenge the political and social structures, and the prevailing values, meant and continues to mean a serious impoverishment of the gospel. Mr Smith undoubtedly describes the predominant values of the 19th century church: his "successful" christians promoted an individualistic faith, to be practised personally within an accepted social context. We do not have enough evidence yet to know whether the Chadderton ranters who had no time for Wat Tyler were typical of local christians in 1841, but they certainly anticipated the future stance of even the Primitive Methodist Church. The churches embraced the values of self-improvement and christian people today are typically reluctant to be reminded of local poverty, their own possible origins within it, and the desirability of its elimination.

Even the significant number of local christians involved in Labour politics and wielding power in the town, have helped shape a party which is reformist not radical, preferring to ameliorate the effects of social change and national policies, rather than wear the mantle of Chartism and promulgate an alternative social vision.

Mr Smith concludes his work with the confident assertion that by the early nineteenth century churches, Blake's Jerusalem "was certainly builded here, even among those dark satanic mills". If, however, the city of God is a place where there is social justice, where all members of the community are enriched, where the powerless are empowered, a place which truly embodies "good news to the poor", then we must say that it was not builded here in the nineteenth century, nor since. Indeed, we have to acknowledge that the churches themselves are not yet united in a desire to stand alongside and enable the poor and powerless.

From this thesis we learn much about the christian contribution to the formative years of industrial Oldham and Saddleworth, and we learn to respect and value it. Those of us for whom local christianity has been a shaping influence learn more about ourselves: we understand why we are as we are. However, we are reminded of our limitations as well as our strengths. If we cannot entirely share his enthusiasm for those years, yet we are grateful to him for deepening our knowledge of our past and giving us a perspective from which to view, perhaps more wisely, the challenges that face us in the place of faith and unbelief, of conflict and community that is Oldham today.

HOWARD SUTCLIFFE

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SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER SPRING 1988

The first and most important item of news if you have not already heard it, is that our Editor, Julian Hunt, has got himself a job, and a house, in Aylesbury, Bucks., and will be leaving us very soon.

Those of us who know him well would have found no difficulty in giving him a first rate testimonial though we shall all be sorry to see him go. He has done a splendid job as Editor of the Bulletin, immersing himself in the work of the Society, involving himself in research, producing interest trails, giving lectures, taking walks and making himself a very valuable member of the Committee. We wish him well.

It is always difficult to fill a gap like the one Julian will leave, but we are fortunate in that Michael Fox has offered to take over the reins as Editor.

Michael has a keen interest in things Saddleworthian. He has produced, in co-operation with his brother Peter, several books, the latest one on Victorian Saddleworth. Many will remember his lectures 'during the Festival period last year - 'The Canal & Railway History of Saddleworth' and 'Victorian Saddleworth'.

I feel to have lost touch with Society matters of late, having missed all but one of the five 1988 lectures due to clashes with other events. I understand that they have all been well attended and of varied interest.

Summer Events.

Saturday 9th July, 1988.

Trip to Kirkstall Abbey, Armley Mills and Temple Newsom.

John Murray is organising this coach trip. The cost will be £5.00 adults and £4.00 children, and this includes all admission fees. Bring a packed lunch. It is planned to leave the Museum Car Park at 9.30 a.m., and to arrive back by 7.15 p.m. Booking slip enclosed please return early.

Saturday 17th September, 1988.

North Yorkshire Dales.

Wendy Murray is organising this trip to enjoy the beauty of North Yorkshire. I understand the cost is likely to be about £10.00 and will include the cost of a meal in the evening. More about this later but get in touch with Wendy Saddleworth 4493 if you want to be included.

Archaeology Group.

Saturday 23rd July, 1988.

Visit to Skipton.

The group has an invitation from Friends of Craven Museum, Skipton, to visit Cliffe Castle and Museum, Keighley - and other places of interest in the Skipton area including St. Andrew's Church, Kildwick, (15th & 16th Centuries). An evening meal will be arranged - contact Jim Carr 3612 or Alec Schofield 4397. Meet at Keighley Museum, 2.0 p.m.

Sunday 12th June, 1988
Piece Hall Museum, Halifax.

A visit has been arranged to the Piece Hall Museum, Halifax, and members are asked to meet at the entrance to the Piece Hall Museum Halifax at 2.0 p.m. For further information contact Jim Carr or Alec Schofield.

Bernard Barnes Memorial Site.

As many will know we are planning to extend the memorial garden at Heights. Mrs. Joan Petford has been most helpful in the planning of this project and in recommending the shrubs and flowers which we aim to plant next Spring after the Groundwork Trust has prepared the site.

Bernard Barnes Essay Competition.

The Committee, and Alan Petford in particular, are drawing up plans for an annual essay competition for sixth form students. The £50 prize will be awarded to the best essay on any aspect of Saddleworth history prior to 1960. More details later.

Roman Exhibition.

Castleshaw Outpost of Imperial Rome. Saddleworth Museum, Uppermill.

I have just had a little note from Jack Hindle who is very much involved with the forthcoming Roman Exhibition at the Museum which opens on the 4th of June for eight weeks.

This is to be in celebration of the successful completion of a four year project involving the excavation and study of the fort site at Castleshaw which has been carried out by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit with the assistance of the M.S.C.

The event will cover the history of the Romans in Britain and the background of the excavations at Castleshaw over the past hundred years illustrated with models, drawings, paintings, sound and vision. There will also be a reconstruction of a barrack block in the Museum yard.

The Museum will be open daily : Monday to Saturday 10.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m.
 Sunday: 12 noon to 5.0 p.m.

Membership Section.

New members who have recently joined the Society are listed below.

Mrs. M. Brunt, Uppermill.	Mr. & Mrs. A. Milnes, Springhead.
Mrs. K. Morrow, Belfast.	Mr. D. Padgham, Delph.
Mr. N. Roydes, Royton.	Dr. & Mrs. E. Williams, Heywood.
Mrs. J.M. Clark, Grotton.	Mrs. M.E. Hill, Royton.
Mr. & Mrs. L.A. Haizler, Grasscroft.	Mr. P.A. Milnes, Springhead.
Miss E.W. Ormerod, Oldham.	Mrs. J. Edwards, Mossley.
Mr. & Mrs. D. Rawlinson, Huddersfield.	Mr. R.J. Asquith, Dobcross.
Mr. C. Scholes, Bristol.	Miss S. Francis, Australia.

Our latest Overseas Member, Miss S. Francis from Australia, is interested and descended from the Lees Family of Beswicks, if any other member wishes to correspond with her on this family Mrs. S. Broadbent will supply her address.

A good response has been received of yearly subscriptions and the new rates for 1988 are detailed below, but those who have not yet paid may we invite them to take the opportunity of booking for the summer outing, and renewing their subs simultaneously with Mrs. Broadbent, your co-operation will be most appreciated. For members not going on the trip and wishing to renew a cheque will suffice with your name and address on the back.

Family Membership..... £6.50 Single Membership £5.00
Retired & Student Membership £3.50

Textile Open Day - Monday 30th May, 1988. Uppermill Saddleworth Museum.

The Museum was open on Bank Holiday Monday this year for a Textile Open Day when the Dobcross Loom and the Asa Lees Mule Frame were operated by our Industrial Archaeological Leader, come Museum Engineer, John Buckley ably assisted by Oliver Benson and Stanley Stewart, the leading members of the Textile Section, this active Section is particularly interested in enlisting help of anyone having textile industry experience whether it be on the weaving or spinning side, wool or cotton, enthusiasm is the requirement and remember there is no time clock !

Vintage Vehicle Rally & Reliability Run 1988.
Sunday 12th June, 1988.

This event will take place this year with a special guest Cyril Smith M.P., and will once again be sponsored by Borough Garages. It will commence at 12.0 noon from Waterside Mill in Greenfield and the vehicles will be due on the standing ground in King George V Playing Fields between 1.0 and 1.30 p.m., anyone who wishes to act as a marshal for this event should contact the Museum's Transport Section Leader Mr. Nelson Platt on 04577-2607.

I do not know how many years I have been writing this newsletter, but I feel I am getting rather stale and that it is time for a change. I am pleased to say that Jack Hindle has kindly agreed to take over.

Have a good summer !

J.G. Parry.

SUMMER COACH OUTING to KIRSTALL ABBEY, ARMLEY MILLS,
& TEMPLE NEWSOM, - SATURDAY 9th JULY, 1988

To: Mrs. E. Broadbent, 30 Beechfield, GRASSCROFT, Oldham. OL4 4EL (2870)

Please reserve	seats	Adults	Children
I enclose £		Names	
Cheques to be made payable to			
Saddleworth Historical Society.		Address	
1988 Society Subs (if applicable)			
Family	£6.00		
Single	£5.00		
Retired	£3.50 per family.	Tel. No.	

Assume you are booked on the trip unless you hear to the contrary.