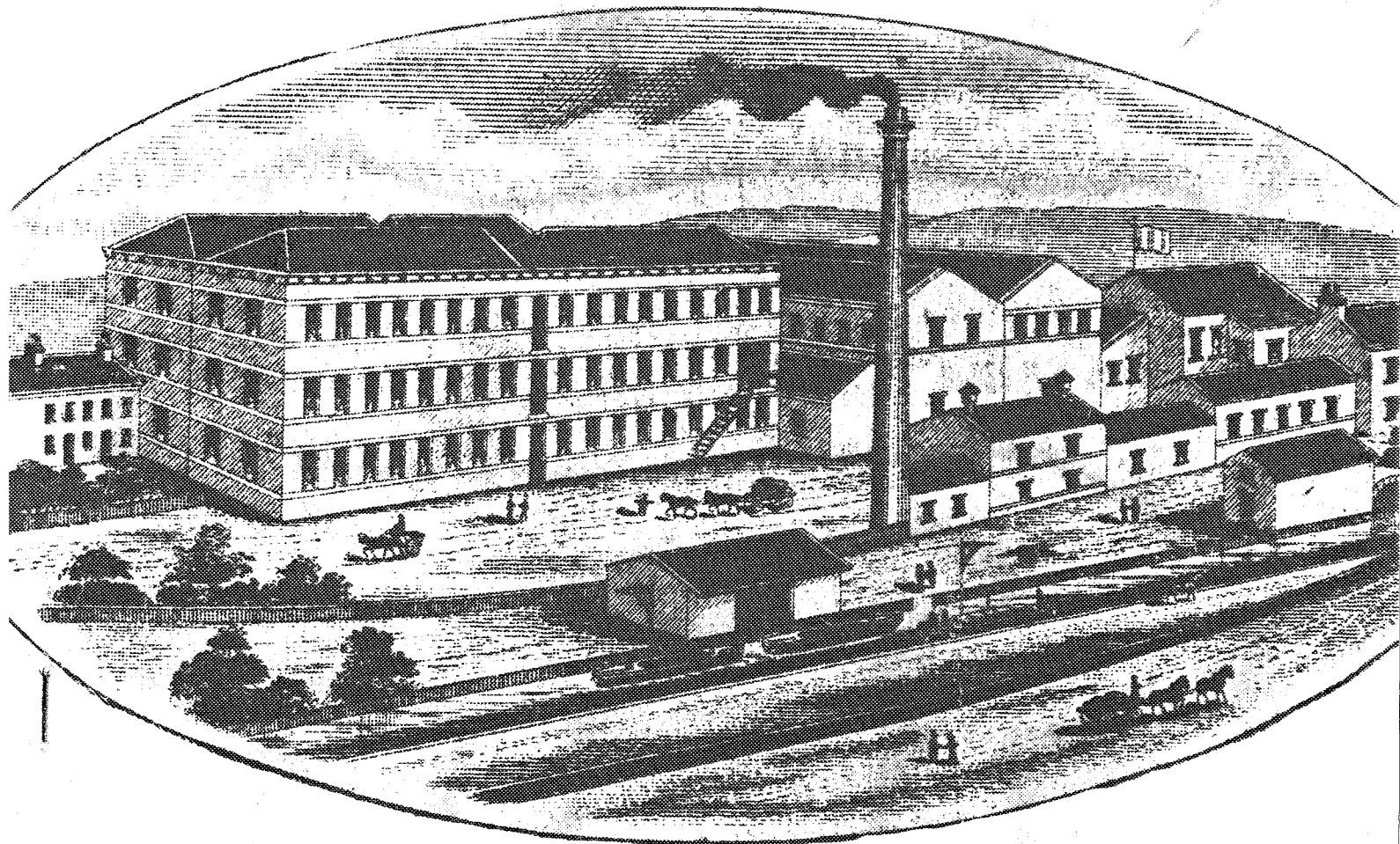


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"AN OLD MAN WITH A GREY BEARD AND A NIGHT CAP ON"

The elderly John Knight

On 29th November 1837 a 'considerable number of radical reformers' sat down to a public dinner to celebrate the 75th birthday of the oldest and most famous local member of their movement, the veteran campaigner, John Knight. His local admirers were joined by distinguished political activists from elsewhere: Dr. Matthew Fletcher from Bury, Salford's R.J. Richardson, the sympathetic Tory factory reformer Richard Oastler and Ashton's fiery preacher the Rev. Joseph Rayner. Stephens, Feargus O'Connor, proprietor of the Chartist Northern Star sent his profuse apologies. (1) All the speakers lavished praise on him for his devotion to the cause of reform, and historians contributing to the heated debate which has arisen since the publication of John Foster's Leninist interpretation of Oldham politics have also stressed his central role in the town's radical coterie, one even going so far as to suggest that their success would not have been possible without him. (2)

But what precisely did this old campaigner believe in and what was his influence in the town in which he came to settle in the late 1820s? Any assessment must necessarily be incomplete. The sources available deal only with public, noteworthy events - usually as perceived by the youthful Edwin Butterworth - and we know nothing of the private interactions and contacts which may have been more significant. However, it seems likely that Knight, as a vendor of newspapers, would have been at the centre of discussion and dissemination of radical opinions in his shop in Lord Street. He himself also remained a committed publicist of his own views, regularly addressing public meetings and, in his final year, contributing to the letter columns of O'Connor's Chartist Northern Star for which he was sole agent in Oldham. (3)

His beliefs, as they emerge from these public activities, were an amalgam of progressive political ideals and nostalgic sentiments, justified by a primitive labour theory of value. His devotion to parliamentary reform remained unshaken. Not only was he instrumental in forming Oldham's Political Union in November 1831 but he stood out strongly against the compromise solution embodied in the Reform Act of 1832, a solution which enfranchised many of Oldham's radicals while excluding him. Nevertheless, he was prominent in the activities of the committee established to secure the return of Fielden and Cobbett in 1832, published the pollbook of that year recording how electors had voted and remained a firm supporter of the veteran campaigner and hero of Peterloo, Henry Hunt, with whom he clearly sided in his disagreements with the ambiguous and equally pompous Cobbett. (4) Like most radicals he expressed open admiration for the American democratic system of government and blamed Britain's ills on the oligarchic control exercised by those who possessed unjustifiable privilege and wealth which they misused by overtaxing the poor. None of this, however, led him into republicanism. After her succession the young Victoria received letters and memorials from him couched in deferential terms, pledging loyalty and wishing her long life, but suggesting amongst other things that she might like to consider a reduction in her civil list and the repeal of the new poor law. He does not seem to have been perturbed by the constitutional implications of such requests to reassert long defunct royal prerogatives at the expense of Parliament. (5)

Despite his championing of the rights of labour, his support for Oldham's small band of Owenites and his hatred of privileged wealth, Knight was not opposed to the concept of private property per se. (6) He resolutely championed the right of individuals to acquire it, seeing this as a natural desire of all industrious men. (7) It was the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few that he deplored. His vision, drawn probably from memories of his childhood years or his reading of the situation in America, was of a society of small producers, working in their homes, tilling their own land. When the shuttle had been confined to the cottage, he asserted, "there was far less misery than at the present day, people were more happy and contented, and the country enjoyed a higher degree of prosperity". (8) Since then land and capital had been expropriated by a few who had reduced the small man to a state of dependent, impoverished misery. While the government oppressed the poor through taxes, therefore, machinery and the employing class were to blame for robbing them of their ability to pay. How he intended to realise the restoration of this egalitarian society of small producers remains unclear, none of his writings containing any hint of a blueprint to bring about the massive social transformation required. Nevertheless he never accepted society's 'maldistribution of wealth' which continued to fuel his campaigning to protect the 'poor, weak and ignorant from the oppression of the rich, strong and cunning'. (9)

Parliamentary reform in this context was a means to an end. In restoring the rights of the people it would bring about cheaper government and lower taxes. He and all his fellow radicals considered taxation to be excessive, the consequence of a huge national debt (greatly increased as a result of the Napoleonic Wars), the maintenance of unnecessary and unjust agencies of oppression, and the immoral extravagancés of the country's aristocratic governors. In particular he championed the abolition of the corn laws, the ending of taxes on knowledge (especially stamp duty on newspapers), the reduction of taxes on malt and hops and, after 1834, the repeal of the New Poor Law. Democracy, the granting of representation to taxpayers would, he hoped, achieve these goals. (10)

As well as supporting Fielden in his fight to gain government protection for the impoverished handloom weavers, the last vestiges of his beloved domestic industry, Knight devoted considerable attention to improving conditions and hours of factory work. Machinery had not only been to blame for destroying the cottage producer, it was now also the cause of the crises of over-production which plagued the cotton industry in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Instead of improving the lot of the worker by allowing the same quantity of goods to be produced with less labour, greedy employers had increased hours of work to line their own pockets. This campaign occupied much of Knight's energy and time in his later years. Although he was to deny being secretary of the Spinners' Union on one of his rare court appearances, (11) he consistently supported attempts to form unions and merge them into wider national bodies like Doherty's National Association for the Protection of Labour. (12) He joined with Fielden and a few other sympathetic employers to promote the short lived and abortive National Regeneration Society in 1834 designed to achieve a universal eight hour day. He supported the rights of workers victimised by the law, especially the famous cases of the Tolpuddle Martyrs in 1834 and Glasgow Spinners in 1837. (13) Above all he devoted himself to the cause of the Ten Hours Movement, dedicated to obtaining legally enforceable maximum working hours for all cotton factory employees. Unlike his more famous Tory associates, Michael Sadler and Richard Oastler, who saw it primarily as a humanitarian crusade to protect child labour, Knight sought to control the hours of all adult textile workers. This, he argued, would remove surplus labour and manufacturing capacity, raising prices and wages leading to an improvement in material welfare. Although popular with the workers themselves, however, this was not a cause or line of reasoning which attracted the wholehearted

support of other Oldham radicals. With the exception of James Mills and James Greaves, both of them working men, others who appeared with him on the platform in the early to mid 1830s expressed doubts about its practicability or re-emphasised the main fight against taxation. Dissenters like William Knott and James Holladay, leading local activists, stressed the moral and intellectual advantages of shorter hours rather than their economic rationale. (14) Not surprisingly, they preferred to put their main effort into other causes.

In fact, this divergence of emphasis on the subject closest to Knight's heart, epitomised the way in which the veteran campaigner was sometimes out of touch, not so much with the majority of the population, as with the new cadre of radical leaders which emerged in the early 1930s. Revered for his reputation and injustices he had suffered in the past - a catalogue he never tired of reminding his audiences of - he was nevertheless frequently overruled by younger men. Most significantly he stood alone in condemning the Reform Act in 1832. Although other radicals were later to share his misgivings, they all accepted it at the time. (15) Unlike Knight, they also showed much greater interest in obtaining local political power and office.

His name rarely features in Butterworth's detailed accounts of vestry meetings during this period; in 1836 he even arranged a factory reform meeting which clashed with the annual election of churchwardens on Easter Monday morning, allowing the Tories to reassert their control. (16) Knight's view of the activities of the Police Commission remained unremittingly hostile, portraying it as a body dominated by men of property who used the police force to spy on the workers. (17) Ironically many of his radical associates qualified for membership of this body in the early 1830s and were amongst the most vociferous supporters of police efforts to stamp out or control what many historians now regard as archetypal, popular working-class pursuits based on the beershop and public house. Knight does not appear to have spoken publicly in support of many of his colleagues' other campaigns; the abolition of slavery, the Anti-Church and State movement dedicated to ending the established church's legal and fiscal privileges, the promotion of voluntarist education and the active encouragement of temperance.

It would be wrong, then, to view Knight as the leader of Oldham's radicals in his declining years but he continued to devote his time to the cause and remained a subject of unquestionable affection and respect right up to his death. On his 73rd birthday his friends had presented him with a pair of silver spectacles at a private party to which Butterworth ruefully commented he had not been invited. (18) Six months before his death he was elected to the post of the township's treasurer at a salary of £15 per annum, a move probably inspired by J.R. Stephens' suggestion of the previous year that his friends ought to make him 'a pensioner of the people'. (19) At his funeral in September 1838, 2,500 people marched 8 abreast behind his coffin and thousands more lined the streets to pay their respects. (20) Stephens subsequently returned to the town to deliver a three hour lecture on the qualities of his deceased friend. (21) Ironically, whatever his origins and earlier business problems his involvement in radical politics through his newspaper agency allowed him to accumulate a small amount of property (not exceeding £400) by the time of his death. (22) Although his brother Benjamin announced that he would continue as 'General newsagent and dealer in all the cheap periodicals of the day'. When the business finally passed out of family hands in 1841 it was on the death of his niece, Hannah Buckley. (23)

Knight's legacy to Oldham, then, is difficult to define. He was probably as important for who he was as what he did, a source of inspiration and a figurehead, a living symbol of the radical tradition and the fight against aristocratic corruption, oligarchy and employers' exploitation. There is no doubt, however, that the 'old man with a grey beard and a night cap on' whom Oastler recalled meeting on his first visit to the town, enjoyed and deserved the affection and respect of working people whose interests he had spent his long and active lifetime helping to define and, above all, fighting for.

NOTES

1. Butterworth Manuscripts (BM) 29th November 1837. These papers are far the best guide to Knight's activities in the 1830s.
2. John Foster, Class Struggle in the Industrial Revolution (London 1974); David Gadian, 'Class Consciousness in Oldham and other North West Industrial Towns, 1830-50', Historical Journal, 1978; R. Sykes, 'Some aspects of Working Class Consciousness in Oldham, 1830-42', Historical Journal, 1980; R.J.Morris, Class Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth Century Towns, article by Gadian, (Leicester, 1986). This is just a selection from a continuing debate.
3. Letters to Northern Star 1838; 27 Jan. 24 Feb. 3 March, 10 March, 7 April, 30 June, 7 July, 14 July, 21 July. Knight was probably responsible for many other items on Oldham at this time, complaining loudly when one of his reports was not printed.
4. Opposition to moderate reforms; BM Jan. 1831, 7 March 1831, 13 Oct. 1831, May 1832; formation of OPU; 14 Nov. 1831, Return of Fielden and Cobbett; July 1832, 16 August 1832; support for Hunt after Cobbett's election; 20 Dec. 1832, 25 March 1834, 17 April 1835; visit to arouse Saddleworth, 11th March 1833; finally obtained franchise; Oct. 1836, Knight's pollbook for 1832 in Oldham Local Studies Centre.
5. Memorial to Victoria, Northern Star, 11 August 1838. He also appealed to George IV to dismiss the Whig ministry, BM 22 June 1833.
6. BM 7th July 1838.
7. See for example, Northern Star 10 March 1838.
8. Northern Star 6 Jan. 1838. Speech in Ashton.
9. BM 14 March 1835.
10. On taxes see for example, BM Jan. 1831, June 1832, 4 Feb. 1833, 15 August 1836; on opposition to New Poor Law, BM 16 Feb. 1835, Northern Star 6 Jan. 1838.
11. Manchester Guardian 11 Oct. 1834, Knight was accused of giving a false reference to a spinner seeking work in Oldham. He was acquitted on this charge, as he was on his only other clash with the law, an attempted prosecution for selling unstamped newspapers.

12. BM 4 Sept. 1830, 12 Oct. 1830.
13. BM 27 March 1834, 2 Nov. 1838. He was still chairing meetings against unfair dismissal just before his death. Manchester and Salford Advertiser 1 Sept. 1838.
14. Short time; BM Oct. 1832 and passim till 1838. For Knott's reservations see BM 12 March 1833. Similar comments about the need to improve the morals and mental condition of the workers were still being expressed by James Holladay, e.g. Manchester and Salford Advertiser 20th April 1844.
15. See footnote 4.
16. BM 4 April 1836.
17. BM 2 August 1836.
18. BM 29 Nov. 1835.
19. BM 29 Nov. 1837.
20. BM 5th Sept. 1838, Northern Star 22 September 1838.
21. BM 17 Sept. 1838.
22. Will in Lancs. Record Office, WCW c1047. He died intestate. His executors were George Knight (son) publican; Samuel Dawson, cabinet maker; Samuel Smethurst, glass dealer, all of Manchester. George was dead within two months.
23. Northern Star 22 Sept. 1838; Manchester Times, 4 December 1841.

WOOLROAD AND THE HUDDERSFIELD CANAL

Between 1794 and 1811 the Huddersfield Narrow Canal was constructed from the town of its title to Ashton-under-Lyne. Its subsequent success as a through route between Lancashire and Yorkshire is questionable but can at least be quantified in terms of tonnage carried and dues collected. Less determinable is the impact this waterway had on the communities through which it passed, as data is fragmented and often obscured by the numerous other influences affecting the settlements in question.

Some light can be shed on how the smaller communities reacted to its advent by study of an individual example. With this aim in mind the hamlet of Woolroad in Saddleworth (grid reference 997066) will be looked at in the context of how its development was affected by its location adjacent to the canal.

A map of 1770 (1) depicts little more than fields intersected by a meandering track on the site where the hamlet was to grow. A handful of yeomen farmers and clothiers had lived in the vicinity for decades, although the tiny number of houses and associated buildings barely constituted a settlement. Signs of change were to come at the end of the century with the erection of Stonebottom Woollen Mill in about 1790 and the arrival of the Standedge and Oldham turnpike road and its Woolroad - Wall Hill branch in 1794. (2) but an extra stimulus was needed to promote the hamlet's growth.

This came in 1799 when the Huddersfield Canal was completed throughout from Ashton-under-Lyne to the new turnpike at Woolroad. This location provided a convenient halt to further progress east pending completion of the Standedge tunnel between Diggle and Marsden; while work on this was proceeding a flow of through traffic between the canal's extremities could be conducted by transferring goods between boats and the turnpike at Woolroad, performing a similar function at Marsden and carting traffic on the intermediate stage over Standedge. The Canal Company first made arrangements to do this in April 1799. (3)

This trans-shipment activity was a powerful impulse to the establishment of the hamlet, as buildings and personnel were required to conduct it. Thus in 1797 the Canal Committee in anticipation of this role had ordered the building of a wharf (4) and had commenced construction of a warehouse the following year. (5) Stabling for the many horses involved in the operation was ordered in the autumn of 1800. (6)

The continuation of this growth required more traffic. In late 1800 John Rooth, the operator of a carrying concern, proposed to maximise his use of the canal for his traffic between Huddersfield and Manchester. (7) Rooth's undertaking of two years later to 'despatch a boat with local goods on every other day from Manchester to Woolroad and vice versa' (8) and his employment in April 1801 as Superintendent of the Canal Company, helped to ensure the new trade he would bring would be one that was both growing and committed to the canal.

Apart from fostering the importance of Woolroad in terms of the volume of goods it handled, Rooth's influence helped to link it more firmly with the adjacent turnpike road which was crucial to local distribution of traffic as well as cartage to and from Marsden. Thus in 1801 he persuaded the Committee of the desirability of building a short road to link the wharf and turnpike at the hamlet, (9) while in April of the following year his action of renting for three years the toils of the trust which governed the same turnpike was also approved by the Company. (10)

How rapid the growth of traffic passing through Woolroad was in consequence of these developments is problematical. Toll income on the turnpike seems not to have increased to any degree between 1803 and 1805, despite Rooth's involvement,(11) yet the Canal Committee's serious response to the 1800 request of the Peak Forest and Ashton canals that a Woolroad-Marsden tramway should be built 'to facilitate the conveyance of goods over the hill' until the tunnel's opening, might indicate that the growth of traffic being trans-shipped was strong. (12)

Certainly the physical fabric of Woolroad was continuing to be added to by the Canal Company at this time. In December 1804, for instance, the purchase of land here was authorised on which 'to build a stable and cottage house for the accommodation of a porter, portering carts, horses and haling (towing) horses.' (13) Three years later the report (14) of the renowned Civil Engineer, Thomas Telford, on the best means of completing the canal, seems to have galvanised the Company into enhancing their stake at this location;

'...Mr. John Rooth be directed to erect a Weighing Machine and Small Cottage at Woolroad for the purpose of weighing Stone, Coal, Lime and other materials that may come on the Wharf...

Resolved that Mr. John Rooth build a Wharfinger's House at Woolroad....

Resolved that Mr. John Rooth purchase a plot of land.... bounded on the north by the Turnpike road leading from Dobcross to Standedge and on the south by Woolroad Wharf for the purpose of building an Agent's House as recommended by Mr. Telford.' (15)

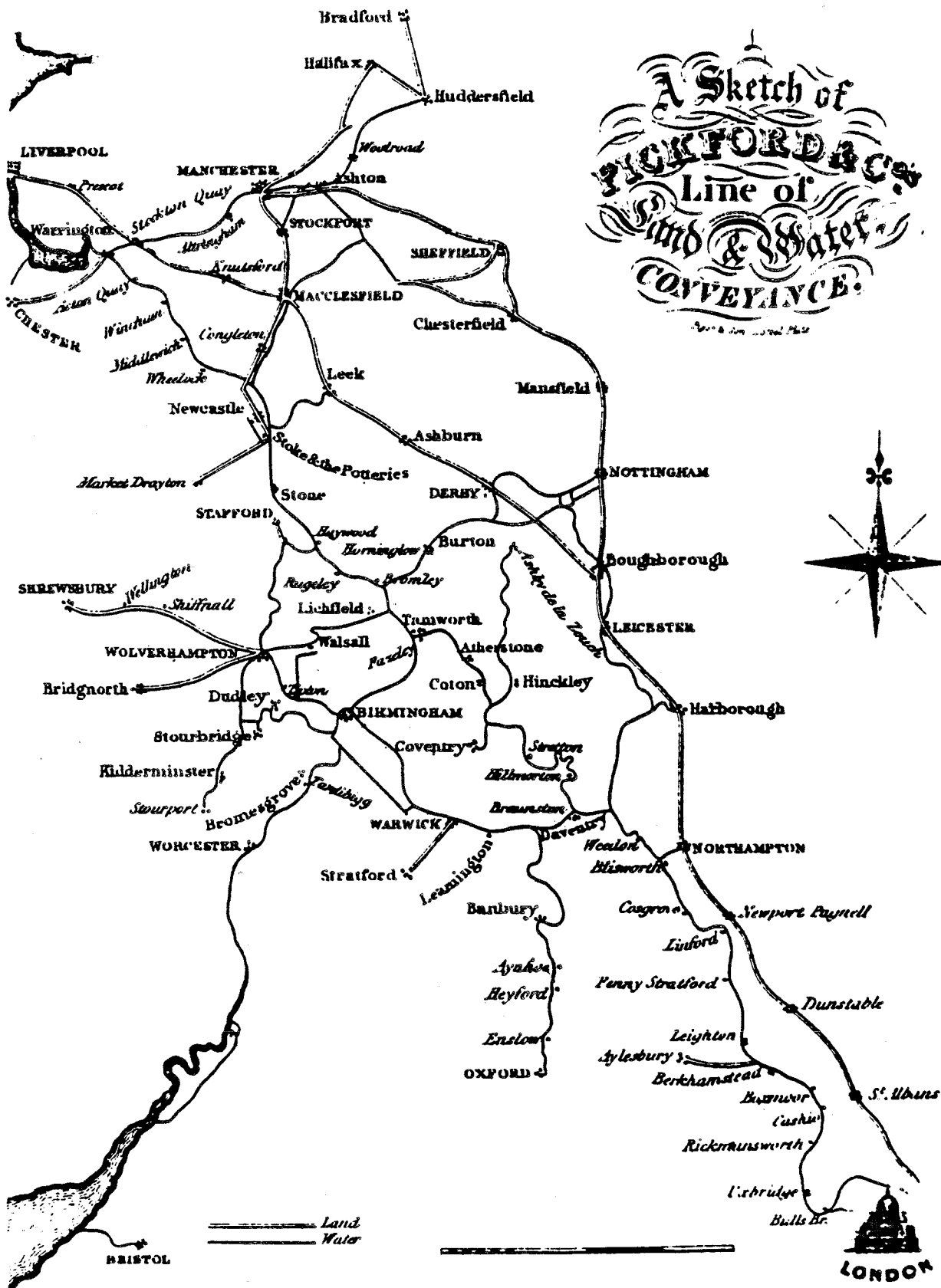
The scope and content of these measures may indicate that Telford considered the arrangements for trans-shipment of goods here as inadequate to the volume being conveyed. The resultant building programme helped to foster Woolroad's status as an important stopping place on the canal and developed its physical presence as a growing settlement in the district.

How, precisely, it functioned as part of the latter is harder to gauge, especially as figures of traffic being interchanged with the local community, as opposed to trans-shipped for onward movement out of the area, are not available. However, after April 1811 when the finishing of Standedge tunnel enabled the opening of the canal throughout, the trans-shipment of goods for carting to Marsden ceased and thereafter traffic handled here was purely of a local nature.

The absence of statistics is again a problem but there are indications that the cessation of the trans-shipment trade was compensated for. In December 1815, for example, we hear of negotiations for the setting up of a private wharf;

'... (the Company) has agreed to let to the said Joseph Lawton... a Plot of Land on the North side of the Canal betwixt the 24th and 25th Locks at Woolroad containing 801 square yards' (16)

The canal's ability to cheaply transport limestone from the Peak Forest canal to the kiln set up at nearby Brownhill in 1801, was also continuing to provide traffic at Woolroad. The latter's importance in this trade, of benefit to the bringing under cultivation of the infertile Saddleworth soils, is indicated by the fact that in 1824 the district's only lime merchant was based here. (17)



PICKFORD & CO

*Have Establishments at all Places upon the above Sketch or convey
Goods without any intermediate Carrier*

The early importance of Woolroad is illustrated in this map showing Woolroad in relation to the rest of the canal system. Taken from an advert for Pickford and Company that appeared in an 1824 Directory.

The steady development of Woolroad at this period seems, however, to have been to a large extent of an insular character, being related more to the operational needs of the Canal Company than to the transport requirements of the immediate district. Building and other activity, as reported in the company minutes, reflects this:

30th December 1813 'Resolved that Mr. John Rooth.... erect a building for workshops at Woolroad....'

10th March 1819 'Resolved that a Smithy and Shed be erected at Woolroad'

25th April 1823 'Resolved that all the boats navigating the canal shall be regularly weighed in and gauged in the Warehouse at Woolroad and that every Wharfinger guilty of neglect in suffering Boats to pass without examination shall be immediately discharged.'

25th November 1825 ... Resolved that land be purchased at Woolroad as a boat yard.' (18)

This impression of self-containment is mirrored in an 1822 map of the area (19) which depicts the hamlet as a substantial but very compact cluster of buildings around the canal and turnpike. A commercial directory of 1824 adds further weight to this by describing the settlement in terms of a community which was vibrant, but essentially set apart from its environs;

'WOOL ROAD, a large hamlet, on Manchester and Huddersfield Canal, with a large inn ('The Navigation') and Canal Company's Warehouse.' (20)

The same directory highlights the potential of Woolroad's wharves as outlets to a practical nationwide system of distribution far larger than the local turnpikes could give access to;

'CARRIERS BY WATER Goods are conveyed and forwarded by canal to all parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and other parts of the kingdom daily, by Buckley and Company, Welsh and Sons and J. Marsden from Woolroad.' The extension of the warehouse in 1829 (21) suggests that local use of these facilities grew. The list of carriers and destinations for 1838 adds support to this;

'CONVEYANCE BY WATER To LONDON and all intermediate places, Pickford and Co., and Kenworthy and Co., daily... TO HUDDERSFIELD, LEEDS, WAKEFIELD, HULL AND GOOLE, Pickford and Co., Kenworthy and Co., Buckley, Kershaw and Co., Marsdens and Co., Thompson and Co., Carver, Driver and Co. and Faulkner and Co. from Wool Road, daily..... TO MANCHESTER, LIVERPOOL, etc. (same carriers as above), daily.' (22)

Both as a repair and boatbuilding centre and a link in a transport chain to the outside world, Woolroad seems to have reached its zenith around this time, partly indicated by a contemporary directory's description of it as 'a considerable village.'

One puzzling feature of the transport services on offer from Woolroad in this period is the virtual absence of regular calls by road carriers. A search through a series of contemporary commercial directories reveals only one reference to such a facility; in 1838 Abel Bradbury and William Dunlop were plying to and from Oldham on a daily basis. (23) The apparent lack of interest shown by such concerns, which were numerous and well established in the district by this time, might suggest that even

at its peak Woolroad wharf was only of limited importance to the transport needs of the local community.

The opening of the Huddersfield-Stalybridge railway and its associated Brownhill-Delph branch line in 1849 and 1851 respectively, can have done little to change this possible status, particularly as the stations and goods depots at Saddleworth and Delph were more conveniently sited for local communities. It seems unlikely, however, that Woolroad suffered a sudden loss of traffic and therefore importance, through completion of the railway, as both concerns had since 1844 shared a common management which initially viewed the two modes of transport as complementary. (24)

The canal was, however, to steadily lose trade from hereon. Reflecting this is the stagnation the hamlet at Woolroad was now suffering, the cessation of new building for the Canal Company being matched by an apparent slowing down of construction by other bodies.

The hamlet as depicted on the 1851 ordnance survey map is remarkably similar in size to that of thirty years earlier.

The gradual ebbing of the settlement's impulse for development by the slow decline of the canal seems to have been given impetus by changes in the local turnpike system, which had the effect of isolating it further from the district's traffic flows. Thus in 1863, after the possibility of the rejuvenation of the hamlet by the building of a branch canal from Delph had been rejected, (25) an act was passed for a direct Delph-Brownhill road which was to largely supercede the original route on this axis which had also served Woolroad. (26)

How significant this trend towards isolation for Woolroad was, is hard to measure. Certainly boat building and repair continued there for some years, (27) whilst even as late as 1891 daily services by water into the West Riding were still being operated, (21) but the stagnation evident in the middle of the century persisted with little change occurring in the size of the hamlet. The ending of the remnants of boat traffic through Standedge tunnel at the beginning of this century dealt a further blow, to be ensued by the final closure of the rest of the canal in 1944.

Today, Woolroad hamlet is a tiny collection of houses scattered along the former Standedge and Oldham turnpike, the widening of which in the 1960s occasioned much demolition of buildings in the locality. The conjunction of its present status as a backwater, a mere fraction of its former size, with the derelict appearance of the canal which still traverses it, is perhaps the clearest testimony that the fortunes of the one have always been bound up with the other. It will be interesting to see whether the restoration of the canal here, currently progressing, will in any way rekindle its erstwhile vibrancy as a community.

(MICHAEL FOX)

REFERENCES

Abbreviations - CHUCC, Committee minutes of the Huddersfield Canal Co.
GAHUCC, General Assembly of the Huddersfield Canal Co.

1. 'A Map of the Inclosures in the Parish of Saddleworth belonging to James Farrer' 1770, Saddleworth Museum Archives.
2. Barnes, B. 'Passage Through Time', Saddleworth Historical Society, 1981, p. 44.
3. Hadfield, C. and Biddle, G., 'The Canals of North West England, Vol. 2.' p.325.
4. CHUCC, 5/8/1797
5. CHUCC, 17/1/1798. This warehouse had to be reconstructed or possibly replaced due to faulty workmanship.
6. CHUCC, 4/9/1800.
7. CHUCC, 18/12/1800
8. CHUCC, 23/12/1802.
9. CHUCC, 2/10/1801.
10. CHUCC, 9/4/1802.
11. Hadfield, C. and Biddle, G. op. cit. p.327.
12. GAHUCC, 29/10/1800.
13. CHUCC, 13/12/1804.
14. Telford, Thomas, 'Report of the works on the Huddersfield Canal' 24/1/1807, Saddleworth Museum Archives.
15. CHUCC, 23/4/1807.
16. CHUCC, 2/12/1815.
17. 'Pigot's Directory' 1824.
18. All from CHUCC.
19. 'A Map of the Township of Saddleworth' 1822, Saddleworth Historical Society Mss. Saddleworth Museum.
20. 'Pigot's Directory' 1824.
21. CHUCC, 19/2/1827.
22. 'Pigot's Directory' 1838, p.144.
23. *ibid.*
24. Fox, M. and Fox, P. 'Pennine Passage - A History of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal' to be published by Huddersfield Canal Society.

25. Barnes, B. op. cit. p.54.
26. ibid, pp. 54/5.
27. Bradbury, J. 'Saddleworth Sketches' Oldham, 1871, p.101.
'By the side of the canal, a little above the warehouse, is an extensive dockyard, where boats are built and repaired for the (canal) company and for private traders'.
28. 'Worrall's Directory' 1891.

LINGSGREAVE CLOUGH

A HUNTER/GATHERER EXPLOITATION CAMP IN THE CENTRAL PENNINES

Lee Cherry

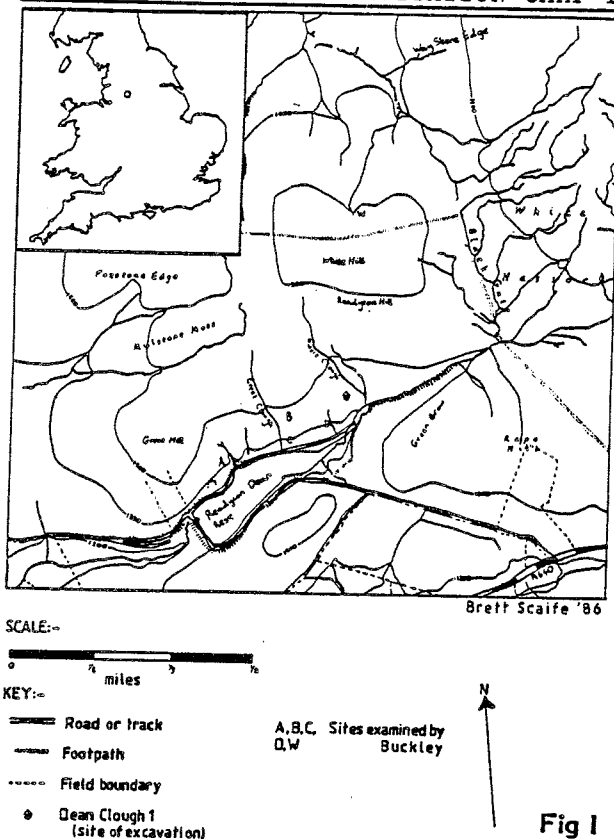


Fig 1

This article describes a small Mesolithic flint knapping site on the moors to the north east of Denshaw (Fig.1). Situated at an altitude of 1410 feet O.D. it lies on the north facing slope of White Hill, 90 metres to the west of Lingsgreave Clough, whose waters form one of the headstreams of the Yorkshire Calder.

This is an area of the Central Pennines which is exceptionally rich in Mesolithic findspots. The site is within two kilometers of March Hill, Lomiot and Windy Hill - all well known flint collecting grounds. White Hill North, a Late Mesolithic site excavated by Francis Buckley in the 1920's, lies about 400 metres to the south (Petch, 1924), and Waystone Edge, an Early Mesolithic site investigated by the Littleborough Archaeological Society is only 200 metres distant on the opposite side of the clough to the east (Littleborough Arch.Soc.1976). Wicken Clough D, another site excavated by Littleborough Archaeological Society and considered by the excavators to have a Late Mesolithic industry lies even closer, about 150 metres to the S.S.W. (L.A.S. 1976).

The Excavation

In October 1985 a few flint chippings were found in a denudation patch at S.D. 922 137. Scraping with a trowel brought to light more chippings and eventually the whole floor was excavated.

The site was excavated by using a grid system in square yards, each square being subdivided into quarter squares. (Fig.2). The peat was removed by spade to within a few inches of the underlying sandy soil. Trowelling was then carried out to a depth of 3 inches below the peat/soil junction. All the flints were found at the junction or within the sandy layer, together with charcoal which was concentrated in squares E5 and F5 with lesser amounts in E6 and F6. (Fig.4).

A number of firecracked flints were also found nearby suggesting the possibility that there had been a hearth in this area. Every stone more than 3 inches in length was recorded. In squares G3, H3, H4 and H6 stones were found, all of which were of Millstone Grit and could have come from the underlying rock.

The Material

The material consists of many types of flint. Nearly 40% of the material is of high quality grey translucent flint, which is almost glass like in fine section. Eleven pieces of flint show the presence of cortex, which suggests that the flint was of pebble origin. Beach pebbles of this type of flint can still be found along the east coast at the present time. 43 pieces of flint of a somewhat unusual type are classified below as being of a 'poor quality light grey flint.'

Two pieces of black chert may well have come from Derbyshire. The small piece of igneous rock could have once formed part of a hammerstone.

Table 1.

Grey translucent flint	152
Pink/brown translucent flint	48
Grey/brown flint	34
Opaque grey flint	22
Opaque red/orange flint	16
Opaque brown flint	15
Poor quality light grey flint	43
Black chert	2
Pebble Cortex	11
Igneous rock	1
Firecracked flint	32
Total	<u>376</u>

The Industry (Fig.5)

A total of eight microliths were found, all of which are small, neatly made scalene triangles. They vary in length from 6 mms. to 14 mms. and in all cases they have the shortest edge on the left. Four of them have secondary working on all three edges, the other four on two edges only.

One implement - (Fig.5. No.9) is somewhat unusual. In general appearance it resembles a petit tranchet derivative arrowhead, but has undergone some fine secondary working on the reverse side of the cutting edge.

The only microburin (Fig.5, No.10) also has its notch on the left side (Clark. J.G.D. 1934). Six blades (11, 13 to 16, 18) have secondary working on one edge and another (Fig. 5. 12) has an oblique truncation at both ends. No. 17 is a burin but may possibly have started life as an endscraper.

Three cores were present - (Fig. 5. 19, 20 and 21).

Table 2.

Tools -	Scalene triangle microliths	8
	Worked blades	6
	Blade with two oblique truncations	1
	Petit Tranchet Derivative Arrowhead	1
	Burin	1
		<u>17</u>
Waste -	Cores	3
	Core trimming flakes	2
	Microburin	1
	Chippings and flakes	353
		<u>359</u>
	Total...	376

Discussion

The Pennine Mesolithic sites are divided into an Early and a Late Period. The Early Mesolithic (7500 b.c. to 6500 b.c.) is characterised by comparatively large microliths called Obliquely Blunted points; the material used being usually an opaque grey/white flint which originates in the Wolds of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

Lincolnshire

The Later Period (6500 b.c. - 3500 b.c.) utilises a number of different flints, which are often translucent, and vary in colour, whose origin is uncertain. Black chert, probably from Derbyshire, is found on both Early and Late sites but is commoner in the latter. Other types of chert, some possibly coming from the Ribblesdale drift, are also found in Late sites.

The microliths of this Late Mesolithic are smaller and vary in shape, and J. Radley has shown that different shapes tend to dominate individual sites so that it is reasonable to talk of 'triangle' sites, 'rod' sites, 'trapezoid' sites. (Radley et al. 1974).

The mixture of materials at Linsgreave Clough suggests that the site belongs to the Late Mesolithic and this conclusion is confirmed by the industry, which is dominated by small scalene triangles.

Reference to Fig. 2 shows that the site was roughly circular in shape, and that the flint density falls off sharply towards the edge. The excavation was extended outwards until a nil return was obtained from the great majority of the outer quarter squares with the exception of E3D and F3c. at the southern end of the site, which both produced four flints.

The site area is somewhat over 16 square metres which seems to fit into Paul Mellars' Type 1. Settlement Group (Mellars 1976) and the industry, with its absence of 'domestic' tools (apart from a somewhat doubtful scraper) into his Type A - Microlith dominated Assemblage. Paul Mellars considers these Type A Assemblages 'reflect a strong bias in favour of primary subsistence activities, presumably hunting'.

No structural features were found, but some patterning is suggested by the central position of the postulated hearth: the comparatively empty area (F6) adjacent to it and the presence of the three cores close to each other on the eastern edge of the site..

The sharp limit to the debris may be the result of some sort of windbreak and also suggests that there was only one period of occupation. Such a small site might have been occupied by 4 or 5 individuals - a single family or a small group of male hunters.

Conclusion

Somewhere between 6500 b.c. and 3500 b.c. this site was occupied by a small group of hunter/gatherers, probably during the summer months, who were making microliths to furnish the barbs and possibly the heads of arrows with which to hunt red deer, wild cattle (aurochs) and other game at a time when the environment would be markedly different from that of today.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank Pat and Margaret Stonehouse for encouraging him to excavate the site and in helping to prepare the paper.

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Proc. of Prehistoric Soc. 40. 1-19.

A	B
C	D

8	0	0	2	1	6	0	0
7	0	13	19	12	8	4	1
6	2	2	13	15	2	27	1
5	1	16	15	62	16	69	2
4	0	4	10	11	10	5	1
3	2	1	1	16	6	0	0
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

Fig 2 Distribution of flints per square yard.

8							
7				2	1		
6			3	5			
5		1	6	9			
4					1		1
3				3			
	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

Fig3 Distribution of fire cracked pieces.

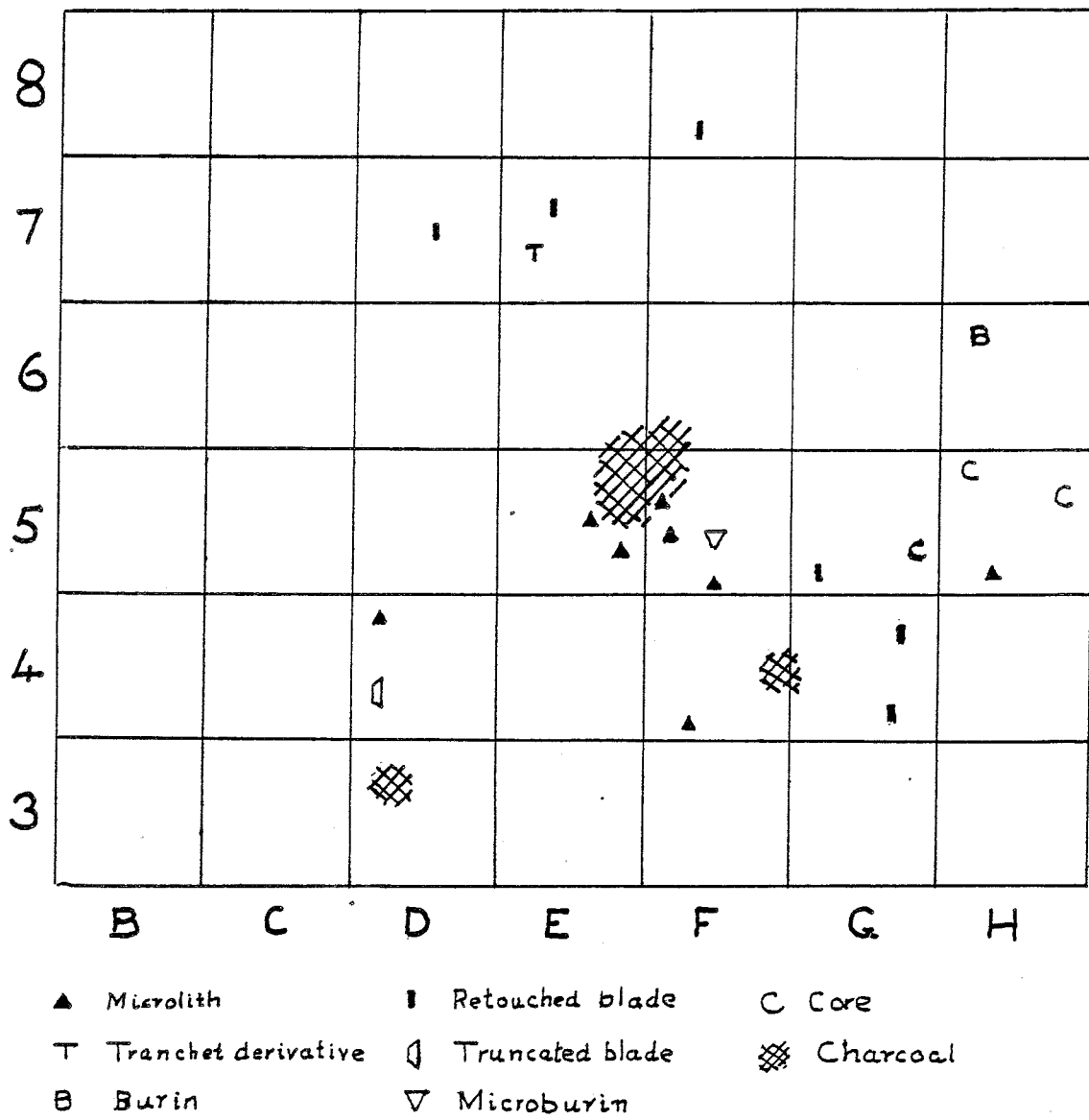
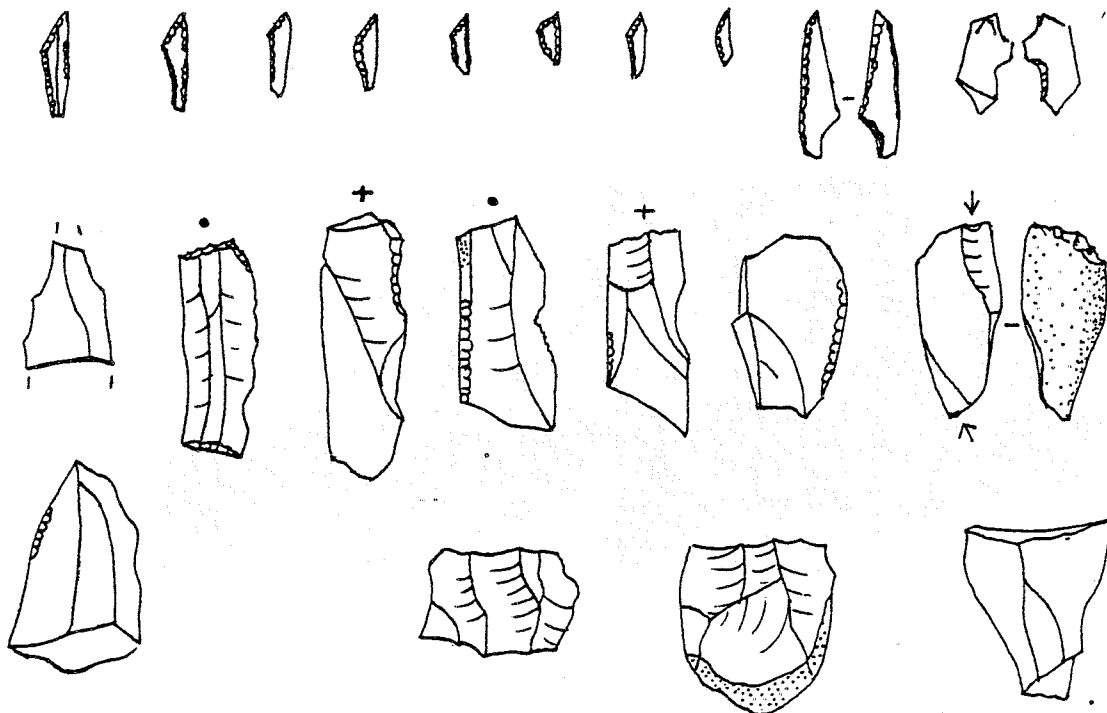


Fig 4 Distribution of artifacts

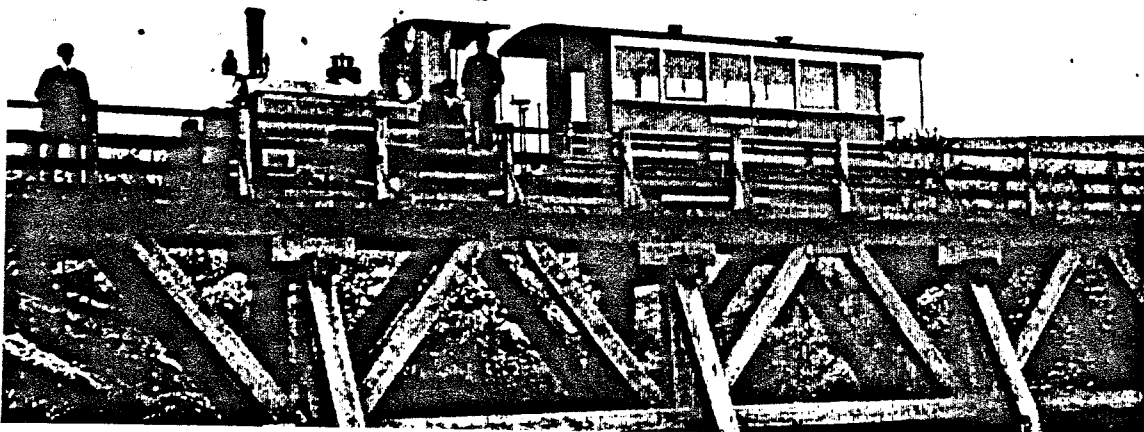


A SADDLEWORTH OUTING IN 1911

The following is an account of an excursion on 9th September 1911 of members of the Saddleworth Literary and Philosophical Society to Chew Reservoir, Greenfield, then under construction. The 'alpine railway' was a contractor's line built to convey construction materials from Micklehurst near Mossley.

'The meeting place was Greenfield Station, and the rendezvous the new reservoir at Chew Valley and the filtering apparatus at Ashway Gap..... Not the least interesting feature was the journey on the "Alpine Railway".the engine and carriages of the contractors, Messrs. Morrison and Mason, had been placed at their disposal, and the whole party were charmed by the magnificent panoramic scenery which comes under observation as the train winds round Noon Sun and the rugged heights of Alphin. The view enters into keen competition with that obtained from the opposite hill of Wharmton. From either point of vantage one is impressed, with the thought that many go miles to see a less enchanting prospect. All too soon the ride came to an end at the foot of the steep gradient which rises to the reservoir At the reservoir Mr. Dixon, the Engineer (of the Water Board) and Mr. Lang took charge of the company, answering eager questions and giving the details of reservoir construction. The wings of the trench afforded an idea of the magnitude of the undertaking, which is now rapidly coming to completion. At a depth of 70 feet a dry stratum of rock has been reached, and all is in readiness for the filling in of the concrete base and the subsequent clay "puddle", which, of course, must be brought to the highest point of the embankment. Seventy feet seemed to be a deep excavation, but the party were informed that the average depth of the trench across the valley had not been less than 120 feet in places reaching to 150 feet. The 20 feet of puddle and embankment still needed is being completed at the rate of eighteen inches a day, so that by Christmas this part of the undertaking, the most important one, will have been brought to an end. By this time next year one may expect the reservoir to be full of water and ready for its useful purpose of supplying necessary compensation water to the Greenfield and Swineshaw Valleys. It is not intended to use any portion of the water for domestic purposes. Chew Valley House and Well were in evidence, and it is not likely that the majority of the party will again have the opportunity of seeing them. If not pulled down the house will be submerged by the water, while the well will be engaged, though out of site at the bottom of the valley, doing its very best to keep up the high-water level of the reservoir.

Tea was partaken of at Kinder Intake Farm, and thence most of the party went to Ashway Gap for an inspection of the wonderful mechanical filters which now give the Saddleworth supply its pellucid appearance and wholesomeness ...
.....'



(Source 'Transactions of the Saddleworth Literary and Philosophical Society, 1911-1912' (Saddleworth, 1912), pp 26/7).

Enquiries about membership of the Saddleworth Historical Society should be sent to:

Mrs. E. Broadbent,
30 Beechfield,
GRASSCROFT,
Oldham,
OL4 4EL.

The Editor of the Bulletin is:

Michael Fox,
4 West Mount,
Shaw Hall Bank Road,
GREENFIELD,
Oldham,
OL3 7LF.

Contributions

The Bulletin aims to reflect and encourage interest in all aspects of Saddleworth's history. As such it relies on a regular supply of articles by members and others interested in recording the history of the area. Fresh material is always required and should be sent to the Editor, who is always pleased to discuss ideas for articles with anyone thinking of contributing.

SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 1988

"It's good to be in Saddleworth,
In that little red necked shire,
When the sunburnt folks are housing
In the meadows round the byre;
When the dales are full of laughter
And the skies are full of light
And the lads and maids are singing
On the Summer roads at night."

Ammon Wrigley.

The Committee have expressed their thanks, on behalf of the membership, to Gordon Parry for the years of service he has given to the production of the quarterly newsletters, the reports to the Press on our lecture evenings and the organisation of the Museum rotas. He will remain on the Committee as a co-opted member so we will have the benefit of his years of experience with the Society. The Committee have the problem of who will take over the Museum Duty rotas. They will make the Press Reports a shared duty and I was invited to take over the newsletter.

At the time of writing this the Committee are preparing an objection to the "Roman Villa Project" which comes before the Oldham Planning Committee in August. Much opposition has been voiced in Saddleworth to this scheme but whether it will be sufficient to squash the idea is debatable.

This evening the Oldham Evening Chronicle reported the death of Mr. Jim Whitehead who has done so much for adult education in Saddleworth in his long association with the W.E.A. He was a member of our Society and our two associations worked closely together. He was also a Trustee of the Museum. We will miss him. Our deepest sympathies go out to Mrs. Whitehead at this sad time.

Membership Section.

New members who have joined the Society since the publication of the last bulletin are :-

Mr. E.W. Felton, Greenfield.

Mr. & Mrs. D.O. Haines, Grasscroft.

Mr. S.R.H. Ransome, Diggle.

Mr. J. Marland, Lees.

Subscriptions for 1988

There are still around 40 subscriptions which are awaited for this year's membership and your attention to this detail would be very much appreciated. Your cheque forwarded to Mrs. E. Broadbent, 30 Beechfield, Grasscroft, Oldham. OL4 4EL will ensure delivery of the next bulletin.

Family Membership £6.50
Single Membership £5.00

Retired - per family and
Student £3.50

Bicentenary of St. Anne's Church, Lydgate.

As many members know this historic event is being celebrated in many ways at the Church and School during July and into October. However, the greatest contribution is made by our Archivist, Canon Airne who has written a book "St. Anne's, Lydgate: The Story of a Pennine Parish 1788-1988", this was launched at the Church on Sunday 17th July, 1988. The Society held a special book launch at the Swan Inn, Dobcross on Wednesday the 20th July, 1988. The price of the book is £5.50 and a special order form is attached for members wishing to purchase a copy.

Besides the "Exhibition of the History of Lydgate" which was held on the 23rd to the 25th July, in the Parish Hall, another exhibition was produced to celebrate the bicentenary of the White Hart Inn and Edmund Buckley. This was accompanied by a reproduction of 'An Old Saddleworth Cockfight', an original oilpainting recorded by Ammon Wrigley in "The Wind Among the Heather", as having hung in the Inn since 1860, and which, unfortunately, has disappeared.

1988 Music at the Gallery Series. Uppermill Museum. 8.30 p.m.

Saturday 10th September.	The Panama Jazz Band.
Saturday 22nd October.	The Jazz Sextet.
Saturday 19th November.	The Dave Donohoe Jazz Band.
Saturday 17th December.	The Uppermill Brass Band Xmas Concert.

Art Exhibitions at the Museum.

6th August - 28th August.	J. Beaumont & P. Rigden. Preview 5th August.
3rd September - 25th Sept.	David Carson Shaw. Preview 2nd Sept.
1st October - 23rd October.	George F. Ainscow. Preview 30th Sept.

Other Events at the Museum.

4th September.	Book Fair.
10th October.	Tameside Canal Exhibition. (Photography).

The Roman Exhibition "Castleshaw - Outpost of Imperial Rome", ran successfully during June and July to record attendances with School parties particularly well catered for.

Archaeology Group.

Visits were made to the Museum of Science & Industry and the Castlefield Fort in Manchester also the Watergrove Trail in Wardle, Rochdale on the 15th of May. The Summer Outing of the Group was to the Piece Hall in Halifax on the 12th of June.

The Council for British Archaeology - Region 5 met on the 23rd June, at the University of Manchester for a Special National Conference on "Aerial Photography and the Use of Video Cameras enhanced by Computers".

The Vintage & Historic Vehicle Display & Run, was held on Sunday 12th June in perfect weather. The Guest was Sir Cyril Smith, M.B.E., M.P. Some 50 cars and motor-cycles took part. The route included: Greenfield, Holmfirth, Meltham, Marsden, Delph, Scouthead and Uppermill.

More than £400 was raised for Museum Funds. The event was generously sponsored by Borough Garage of Oldham.

The first of our Summer trips, arranged by our Chairman, took place on the 9th July. Forty one intrepid souls ventured forth into white rose country, stopping at Kirkstall Abbey and House Museum. This proved to be a delightful step back into the past with the street museum rivalling that of York. Armley Mills, our next port of call, have taken on the role of guardian of the West Yorkshire industrial heritage, and is a most impressive complex. Our final destination was Temple Newsam House - a truly magnificent mansion. The city of Leeds should guard its inheritance jealously.

As someone said on our way home - "This has been one of the better days of the year."

North Yorkshire Dales Trip:

Saturday 17th September, 1988. Wendy Murray is organising this coach trip which will include the Dales, over Buttertubs Pass and Richmond. The cost will be £10 and this will include the cost of a meal. Bring a picnic meal also. We leave the Museum Car Park at 9.0 a.m., booking slip enclosed, please return by the 10th of September.

The Bernard Barnes Essay Competition.

The Society proposes to award an Annual Prize of £50 for the best essay on any aspect of Saddleworth history submitted by a student who is receiving full-time education and who will be below 19 years of age on the 31st of August, 1988.

The closing date for entries will be the 31st December, 1988.

Further details will be sent round to schools in the near future or may be obtained from the Secretary of the Society.

J. Hindle.
August, 1988

SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NORTH YORKSHIRE DALES TRIP

SATURDAY 17th SEPTEMBER, 88
9.00 a.m.

Please book _____ places for the Dales Trip.

I enclose £ _____

Name/s _____

Cheques made payable to:
Saddleworth Historical Society and
forwarded to Mrs. J. Murray,
134 Oldham Road,
Denshaw,
Saddleworth,
Oldham. OL3 5RP
(Sadd. 4493)

Address _____

Tel No: _____

SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ST. ANNE'S LYDGATE: THE STORY OF A PENNINE PARISH 1788-1988

by Canon C.C.W. Airne, M.A.

To: David Cartside,
High Barn Cottage,
5 The Shaws,
UPPERMILL,
Saddleworth,
Oldham. OL3 6JX

Please supply _____ copy/copies. £5.50 each.

Name _____

Address _____

Cheques/P.O. payable to Saddleworth
Historical Society.

Post Code _____

Please add 67p for postage and packing if
resident outside Saddleworth.

Overseas Members - please contact Mrs. E. Broadbent.