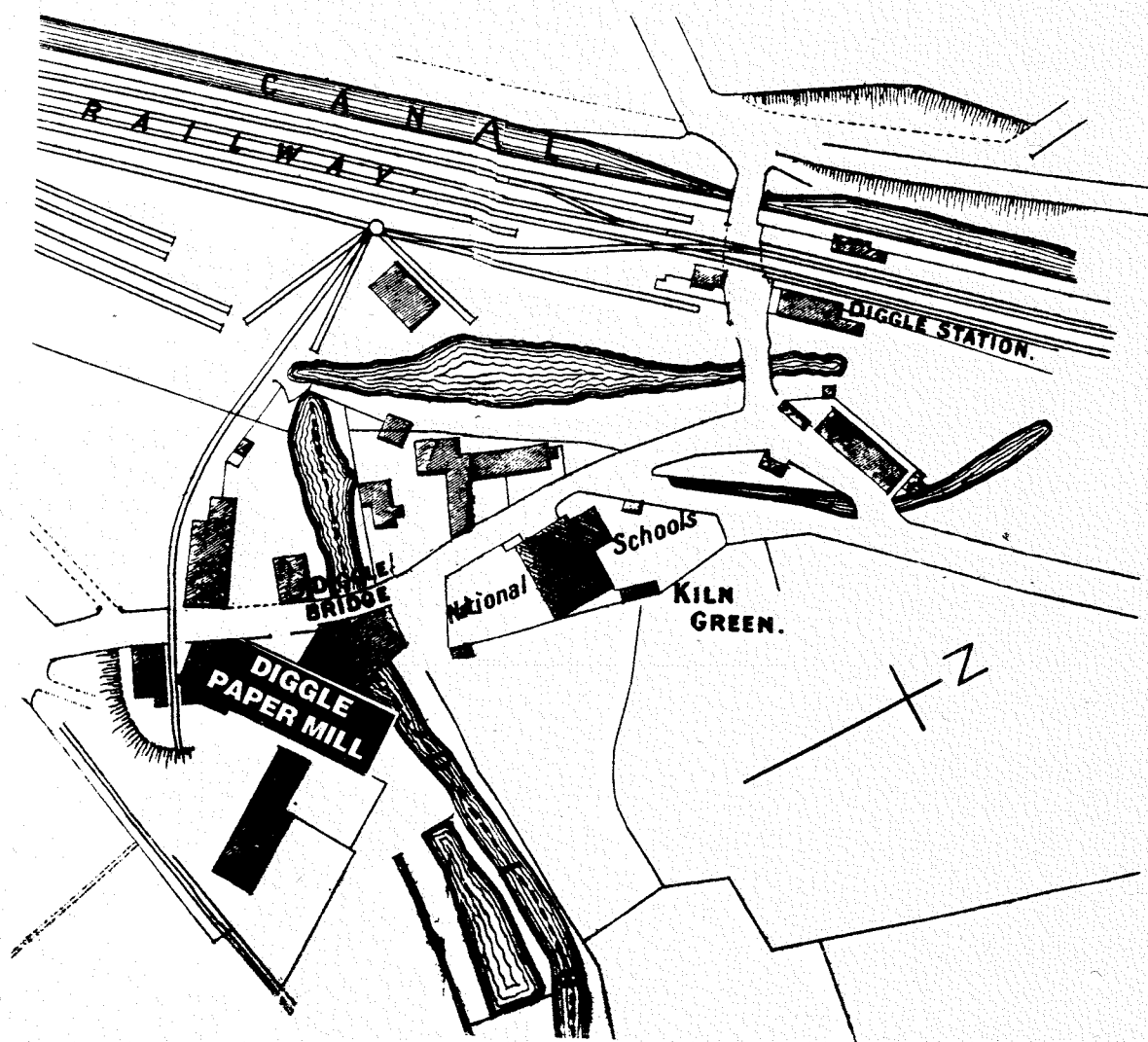


Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin



BULLETIN
OF THE
SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 21. Number 4.
WINTER 1991.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION - Detail of a plan of Diggle Bridge and
environs prepared in 1886. Although features
have been simplified, there is a clear
depiction of the railway and canal immediately
before building of the third Standedge
railway tunnel, completed in 1894.
(Taken from a document describing land to be
sold at an auction to be held at Uppermill on
12th July, 1886 - reproduced with the
permission of Enid Beattie).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - delivered at the Society's A.G.M. on 12th December, 1991.

This is the twenty-fifth A.G.M. held by the Saddleworth Historical Society, and the business of the year has maintained the highest standards. We have enjoyed our peaks and suffered our losses. All were saddened by the news of the death on 4th February, 1991, of George Barrett, valued leader of the Archaeology Group and a committee member. He has been missed in many ways and his place has still not been filled. It is with regret we also record the death of Mr. C.S. Bescoby of Delph, where he was much liked and appreciated.

This time last year we were busy collecting subscriptions for Maurice Dennett's "Cherry Valley Chronicles" which was to appear during Whitsuntide as our publication celebrating the Ninth Saddleworth Festival of the Arts. Congratulations are offered both to Maurice, now a committee member, and to all who assisted in the book's preparation and during the Festival.

A programme of seven lectures and two trips was arranged for the 1991-2 season. Once again the Society is fortunate in being able to call upon members - Peter Fox and Alan Petford - to contribute. In arranging the programme, the Secretary, Neil Barrow, attempts to cater for members' interests. As in recent years lectures have ranged from local museums, industrial archaeology and nearby communities. The Secretary would welcome suggestions for subjects or speakers for future use.

In July our annual trip, organised again by Wendy and John Murray, took us to Beamish, and our thanks go to all who assisted in the organisation of this most enjoyable day out. Recently a smaller group continued the industrial archaeology theme with visits to the Bolton Steam Museum, organised by John Buckley, our link with the Northern Mill Engine Society, and to the Ellenroad Mill in Milnrow. John also reports that steady progress has been made in the textile section of the Museum, and the five working days were well attended by the public. Carding, spinning, winding and weaving were demonstrated. The machines have also been operated for visiting school parties, by special arrangement.

The Singer card lacing machine has been installed and is now ready for use. A warp is being prepared for the jacquard loom and it is hoped to have this in operation early next year.

The Dobcross loom is currently weaving a Royal Stewart Dress tartan. This colourful tartan requires the full potential of the loom in that six shuttles with different colours are in use changing automatically as the pattern is formed. The first piece has been through the finishing process and is now ready for sale.

The Archaeology Group has continued to meet monthly at the Cross Keys, Uppermill, thanks to the kindly hospitality of Mr. Philip Kay. Dr. Pat Stonehouse has led sessions on Neolithic Derbyshire, Stone Age Saddleworth and a discussion on the Mesolithic period. Mrs. Beryl Lynch has entertained us with an illustrated account of her visit to China and an Archaeology Quiz ended the year. Summer visits included a trip to the Bacup Natural History Museum, Towneley Hall, Burnley, and following the Castleshaw Trail.

Mr. David Gartside, our Publications Officer, has given a detailed account of the year's transactions, and we thank him for all his endeavours. In the year ended, sales of publications, excluding bulletins, totalled £4901. This compares with previous years:

1985	-	£2012
1986	-	£1802
1987	-	£8001 (Festival)
1988	-	£3504
1989	-	£2766
1990	-	£1766

This year's figure includes sales of Cherry Valley Chronicles totalling £2,289.

We continued to buy and distribute "Saddleworth Story" on behalf of Dorothy Latimer's W.E.A. group.

Trails for Diggle and Castleshaw are still in course of preparation, both with illustrations by Stanley Broadbent. Trail No. 7. Delph, is almost out of stock and a reprint is now required.

Mr. Frank Neild has joined David and has given most welcome assistance to servicing the Oldham outlets for our publications.

Finally, since some of our prices have been held steady for the past four years or so, a review of prices would now seem reasonable.

A high standard has again been achieved this year in the production of our quarterly Bulletins through our Editor, Michael Fox. The variety and scope of the articles have been widely appreciated. So, too, has the Newsletter which Jack Hindle turns into a literary masterpiece. Both Michael and Jack would welcome articles for the Bulletin and items for the Newsletter. We thank all our volunteer Bulletin distributors.

Meanwhile, Jack has also been devoting time to the Bernard Barnes Memorial Fund and ways in which we may develop an award to replace the Essay Competition. Further suggestions would again be appreciated.

Society members also contributed to the Museum's major summer exhibition "Look at Saddleworth" which provided a provocative insight into the past exploitation of our villages and suggested choices we have to make for our future. Members also led some of the walks organised in support of the exhibition.

The Society archives continue to grow, and with the Museum archives doing likewise, the Archives Room is bursting at the seams.

The most important acquisition this year has been Bernard Barnes' collection of books, his manuscript notebook and other items, together with a remarkable collection of about 4,500 slides. The books and about 1,150 slides have been catalogued and calendared. The whole collection, housed in a three drawer filing cabinet, has been presented by Mrs. Jean Barnes, to whom we are very grateful. The top drawer should be available to researchers by Easter.

Another interesting acquisition is a genealogical table of the families of Linthwaite and Lees, compiled and presented by Susan Elizabeth Francis of New South Wales, Australia, to whom also we are grateful.

Other items, too many to include in this report, have been received with thanks.

We are most grateful to Canon Airne and Maurice Dennett, who with members of the Museum staff have worked hard throughout the year on all aspects of our archives.

The Society has purchased two video films of past happenings in Greater Manchester, from the North West Film Archive, Manchester Polytechnic, and a kind friend has provided us with a microfiche reader.

Our Vice-Chairman, Mr. Stanley Broadbent, has also done a prodigious amount of work during the past year in many different aspects of both Society and Museum on Royal George Mills, Greenfield. He maintained observation and kept contact with the Directors during the refurbishment of the tower. The clockface has been kept, but the wooden louvered tower has been replaced by a suitable vaned weather-cock in the form of a ship.

The Social Committee organised a Mad Hatter's Tea Party which was held at the Museum in March and was decorated with illustrations from Lewis Carroll, these eventually being donated to Booth Hall Children's Hospital. The Committee is to be congratulated for the success of this event and whose hard work was reflected in the glamour of the occasion, being enhanced by the music of The Museum Pieces, who are also to be praised.

The third reprint of the Countryside Maps was organised after being sponsored by local businesses for the first time. This approach is to be recommended in the future for this publication or any other of a similar nature.

The efforts to obtain the listing of the Rome Mill, Springhead, failed and were rejected by the D.O.E. on multiple grounds.

Although the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Society had promised to complete the closure of the Wool Road Warehouse during the summer of 1991, this effort failed due to lack of endeavour by the Canal Society's Architect; another Architect has been appointed.

Jazz Concerts have been held at the Museum Gallery with the support of a small committee, plus the booking skills of our Ashton agent, Mrs. Catherine Hepworth. All are to be congratulated for their unstinting efforts.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT, 1991.

Mrs. Elsie Broadbent, our hard-working Membership Secretary, reports that once again another successful year has been achieved by the Society in maintaining its total membership of 416, this includes a total of 30 new members.

It has been a year of visits and in June Mr. Howard Lambert from Chesham, Bucks., came to continue his researches into the Lees family and the Linthwaites. He was able to visit some of the old homesteads in Delph. At the same time a family tree had arrived from Miss Susan Francis in Australia, who is also descended from the Lees family. A connection has been established here and the Lees family tree, a large one in proportion, was lodged in the archives.

Mr. & Mrs. J.F. Holroyd from Stratford-upon-Avon were able to attend one of our lectures at the Museum. During the Festival Mr. & Mrs. Garside Durkee from Connecticut collected their own volume of The Cherry Valley Chronicles from the Book Launch at the Civic Hall.

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Rhodes Brown, who live in Canada, and are related to the late Lord Rhodes, visited in September and stayed in Diggle with Mr. & Mrs. D. Beattie.

Of late we have been able to arrange a trip down memory lane for one of our new members, Mrs. Charlotte Meadowcroft of Aylesbury, who returned to the delights of her childhood at Forty Row, Hey Top, Greenfield, where she had

lived for eight years up to 1914. The party of eight were met by our Secretary, Neil Barrow, and entertained at Hey Top by Mrs. Eunice Bingley.

This year there have been two generous donations from Mrs. Esther Shaw Lawn in California, whose support for the Society is greatly welcomed and appreciated.

Finally, I regret to report the retirement from your committee of Mr. Gordon Parry after many years' service. He goes back a long time in the annals of our Society and members remember him for many varied contributions.

As Head of Centre at Saddleworth School he gave invaluable assistance in co-ordinating with the school to provide facilities for meetings and lectures then held in the School Library or Staff Room.

He edited our Newsletter for many years and assisted in the collation and distribution of the Bulletin.

Recently he has served as the Society's Liaison Officer with the Museum Management Committee. He formerly produced the rota for Museum Weekend Volunteers.

Many will remember his excellent art work, especially in our social activities, both at the Gallery and at the Civic Hall. We appreciate too his music with the 'Museum Pieces'.

Gordon has been especially useful in his contributions to Committee Meetings when he could stop us in our tracks and make us think as he produced another point of view, another dimension to the discussion.

A small presentation was made to show the Committee's appreciation of all his dedicated service over the years. No doubt we shall hear his violin again in future social events and see his art work decorating the Gallery. Members of the Social Committee made a presentation to Mrs. Parry.

However, he will be greatly missed.

Finally, I thank the officers and members of the Committee for all their hard work during the year. Their efforts and those who have assisted in any way are most appreciated.

JIM CARR.



BECKET WHITEHEAD

Mrs. J. Hadfield of Shaw, a descendant of Becket Whitehead, has presented to the Museum Archives a collection of his papers, including (on permanent loan) the story of his early life.

She has very kindly given permission for this account of his early years to be reproduced in the Bulletin. The first part appears below, the others will follow in successive Bulletins.

M. Dennett.

THE MEMOIRS OF BECKET WHITEHEAD

These are the memoirs of Becket Whitehead of Heights Farm, Delph, Friarmere, in the Urban District of Saddleworth, in the Division of Upper Agbrigg, in the West Riding of the County of York, Yeoman, (being a freeholder in my own right) and a Fellow of the Geological Society of London, an honour conferred upon me by certain gentlemen belonging to the University of Leeds as a reward for my interest in and knowledge of the local rocks and what appertains to them, from the point of view of geologists. I may add that my knowledge of the local strata, and the remains of its bygone fauna and flora, is by no means complete, but sufficient to be useful to people in my station of life, and frequently to others also.

I was born on 17th July, 1879, at a small farm in the Castleshaw Valley, in that part of Saddleworth known as Friarmere, known as Moorcroft Wood Farm. The Rev. Mr. Headach, Vicar of St. Thomas's Church, Heights, at the time of my christening, describes me in the register as Becket, son of Elizabeth Whitehead of Moorcroft Wood. My father's name, though well known by repute, does not appear in the register, my birth being illegitimate.

The household into which I was born consisted of my mother, who at that time was twenty-nine years of age, my grandfather, who was nearing seventy, two uncles in their early twenties, and named respectively Henry (Harry) and James, and a cousin named Mary Alice, whose age came between those of the two uncles.

My grandfather was a widower, my grandmother having been dead for several years. He was a weaver - handloom - now or had been. Now he was content to potter about with a few cows, pigs and fowls and, of course, that old weaver's friend and standby, a donkey. He had been fairly well educated in his younger days, having been sent to Ralph Broadbent's school at Springhill, Heights, and also under the same tutor at Castleshaw School. He was well read, and could converse well on many subjects. In arguments on political matters he was a formidable advocate who could confound opponents with turns of wit that generally brought the laugh to his side.

As a result, he was somewhat of a favourite in alehouses, and especially at the White Lion at Delph, where he would frequently stay enjoying the liquor and the good company until the negotiation of the various paths along the damsides and the river banks became a matter of concern to all those who had an interest in his welfare. It was said that he generally scorned all help, and managed to arrive home safely on the darkest nights. Maybe he owed much of his good fortune to the Providence that attends on drunken men and children.

In his younger days he had spent a lot of time with boon companions who had more money to throw away than he had. These included the Mills' of

Wood and Millcroft, Schofields belonging to various families round about, the Kershaws from Heights and another lot from Paradise, and a motley of others from Delph and district.

He was a fine physical specimen of a man, not unduly tall, but of great breadth of shoulder and of great physical strength. Once he wrestled the champion of Oldham, a man who went by the name of Bill o' Jane's and beat him. This was at Heights in 1853. As my grandfather was born in 1810, this would make him forty-three years old at the time. Another time he fought the champion of Mossley for a stake, and won. They fought at Mossley, and some of the Schofields and Kershaws from Heights and Paradise accompanied him. I don't think the Mills' would be hanging far behind.

In his later years he was subject to sciatica to some extent which kept him at home more. He was a kindly, homely man by nature, and apart from his sprees and the follies he was led into by his love of company, he was well liked and well respected by his neighbours.

He was a reader and a thinker, able to quote poetry at length and to entertain a company. He taught me the alphabet, to read, count and tell the time. I shared practically all his meals, and accompanied him wherever he went. We visited every auction sale for miles around; I remember Porridge Gud's sale at Pingle Mill, and Dockum's at Marleearth Nook, where he bought some ladders. No event of importance which was prearranged took place without our presence. I went with him a-milking on summer evenings in what was known as the Sheep Close, and haymaking in a small meadow called 'Pon Steyl' (anglice Pan Handle) and in the Harrison Meadow, which was on the farther side of the brook. I went with him for corn to Schofield's shop in Castleshaw, which we returned with on donkey back. I remember once, when we went for corn, one Saturday afternoon, my grandfather had a severe attack of sciatica and was doubled up with pain. I offered to carry him, and when we got home he related the incident, which was remembered for some time afterwards.

Being over 70, and having two sons, he carried out only such jobs as pleased him; these consisted mainly of seeing to the animals in the mornings. My grandfather numbered among his many acquaintances several old cronies who were in similar circumstances to himself as regards the disposal of time, and the visits which passed between them were numerous and oft-repeated. Every morning, after milking and attending to the rest of the farm stock, there was a daily meeting and card party with Joe Butlin, Bill O' Robin's and Greyt Tom o' Ringley's at the house of the last named, at Grange. Sometimes, a Kershaw from Heights, or Shirtle the Elder, would attend one of these card parties, in which the game was all-fours, and the sum waged never more than a halfpenny per player per game, and the game eleven up.

One morning we found the donkey kicking and lifting its legs up - one after the other as though in pain of some kind. My grandfather seemed puzzled with it and, not knowing what to do, decided not to turn it out into the field, but to leave it in and see how it went on. 'Happen' he said, 'it'll be better when we come back.'

After we got to Grange, my grandfather mentioned the donkey to his cousin, Tom o' Ringley's, and after thinking it over for a bit, Old Tom observed,

"Aw'll tell thi what, Whiteyed - thi donkey's gotten t' ballywarch, that's what Aw think; donkeys are queer things, even t' best of 'em. Neaw, if it were a horse, Aw could tell thee better, but that's what Aw co' it - ballywarch."

Aw doan't remember ever seein' a deeod donkey, but Aw guess they dun dee some time, but Aw ne'er sin a deeod 'un yet".

Grandfather said he hadn't, and Joe Butlin said -

"Aw've yerd a donkey mackin' a noise mony a time as made me think it were deein', but when Aw've gone a lookin' it's bin as wick as ever. They nobbut dee once, a donkey, an' they putten it off as lung as they can, like everybody else. Thi donkey'll be o' reet when tha gets back."

"An' if it isn't" advised Owd Tom, "give it some soot an' wayter, that'll happen do it good."

"An' heaw mun Aw give it that ? asked Grandfather.

"Tha' mun urn it into it wi' a bottle" replied Tom.

When we got back to Moorcroft Wood, the donkey was no better - worse if anything, still kicking and lifting its feet in turn, and every now and then it would lie down and then get up sudden like. We could see that something ailed it. My grandfather got a bit of nice hay for it, but it wouldn't have it. Then he made it a bran mash, and put a bit of condiment in it, but it hardly looked at it. Then Bill o' Robin's dropped in and said that he had seen the donkey in the field the day before and that it had 'seemed o' reet' and that he couldn't understand it.

"Happen" he said, "it's gotten a bit o' cowl" but grandfather replied "It's had more chances o' catchin' cowl nor that, and a lot worse weather to catch it in."

My Aunt Matty, who lived at the farm just above us, and was my grandfather's sister, had heard about the donkey and what was going on. She sent her son, Sam o' Bob's, down with the message:

"Tell eawr John to warm it a quart of ale an' put a bit o' sugar an' a greyt spoonful o' ginger in it. That'll warm it up if owt will."

Grandfather did as he was bidden, but the donkey only snuffed at it, and drank very little. Bill o' Robbin's said "It ought to ha' bin whisky, not ginger."

Then they began arguing about how old it was. Grandfather said it had formerly been his brother Harry's donkey, and that he didn't know how old it was, but it was there when he came to live at Moorcroft after his brother's death. Then he asked Sam, who had been his brother's cow-lad up to his brother's death - "Is it owder nor thee ? Tha ought to know." Sam replied that so far as he knew it was not, but came between his sister Nan and himself in point of age, but he had no idea how old his sister was, and that she had forgotten herself, or she wouldn't tell. Nor did he know how old the donkey was when he first met it. No one bothered about the age of a donkey when buying one, and you couldn't tell much by looking into its mouth, as you could with a horse or a cow.

Eventually it began to dawn on them that the donkey was approaching the time when even asses have to leave this sorrowful world. Advice was cheap, even in those days, and compared with today it is about the only thing that hasn't gone up.

After listening to several other suggestions regarding the donkey's survival, grandfather began to think about the soot and water remedy, and finally decided to try it

Accordingly, a 3 gill glass bottle was obtained, a handful of soot put in and the bottle filled with warm water. The next item on the programme was how to administer it. Bill o' Robin's said that the best way was for one of them to hold the donkey's head up, and another to prize the donkey's mouth open, so that they could get the neck of the bottle in on one side, then to let the whole contents of the bottle trickle down Neddy's throat. It was decided that grandfather should administer the dose, with Sam o' Bob's to assist, and that Bill o' Robin's should hold the donkey's head up.

"An' bi sure" said Bill "that it gets t' lot. Once you've started dunnot give o'er teemin' till it's o' gone. Ne'er heed it kickin'. It's no good hawve doin' t' job."

The donkey seems to have got the medicine with little loss, and something besides, for it was later discovered that a large part of the bottle neck was missing, and when Bill let go of the head, several pieces of broken glass dropped from the donkey's mouth, but nothing like the amount that was missing from the bottle. Sam o' Bob's wondered if it had swallowed some. The donkey, however, did not seem to get on. It still refused to eat and, one morning, when we went in to try it with a bit of hay it refused to get up. Later in the day we found it dead, and the next day, being Saturday, my two uncles buried it at the top of the meadow, near to the footpath that led to Wood Mill. We did not have a post mortem, but put the cause of death down to ballywarch, plus having swallowed part of a glass bottle.

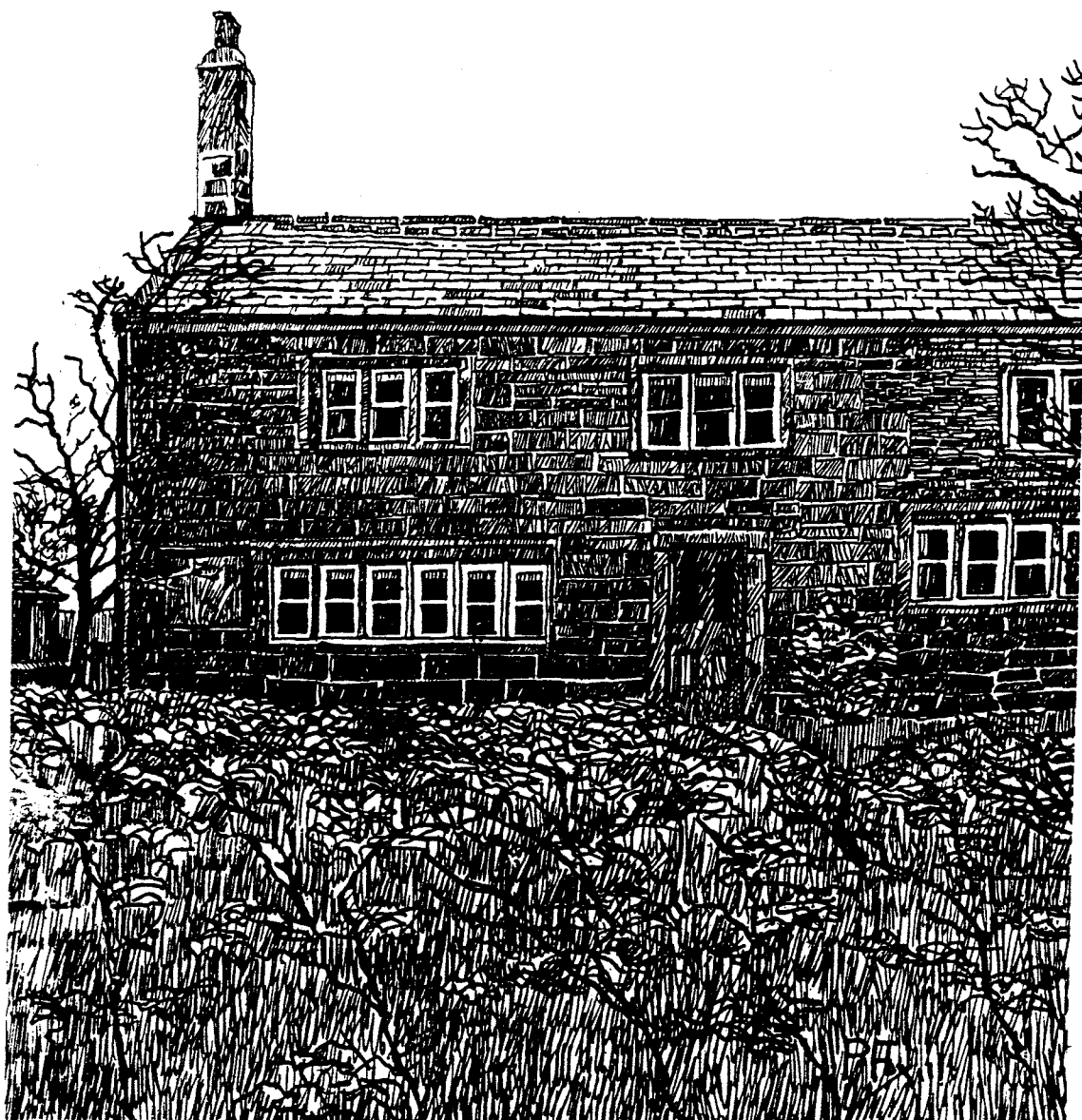
Captain, our dog, had a thick, shaggy coat of black, with some white on the neck and breast, and a bit of tan on the legs and round the ears. My grandfather thought a lot of him and Captain accompanied him almost everywhere. He was a likeable sort of dog, and was absolutely fearless. He could hold his own in fights with other dogs in pubs or at auction sales, and generally came well out of them. He was said to be the only dog in the neighbourhood that could worry a hedgehog. The big mastiff at Hull Mill had no terrors for Captain as he had for all the other dogs around. Captain seldom passed the mill without offering him battle. His leather collar and the thick fur round his neck prevented other dogs from getting a vital hold on him. I think my grandfather, who hated a quitter, took a certain amount of delight in him.

Joe Butlin was an old handloom weaver. He lived alone, in an old house in what was known as the Lower Fold at Grange. I have an idea that he was a bachelor; I never heard anything of a Mrs. Butlin, but I may be wrong for all that. Thomas, known as Greyt Tom o' Ringley's, was a big, tall man who farmed the major part of the hamlet of Grange and the lands appertaining thereto. He was a big, maudlin chap, considered by some to be on the slow side. Actually, he was a prosperous farmer with an eye to the main chance. He had an upgrown family of four sons and one daughter living with him. Besides farming they made, hawked and sold bakestones, bought, broke and sold horses, and traded in cattle and dead farmstock. My grandfather said that Greyt Tom would cheat for a halfpenny, hence the disputes and arguments that card playing gave rise to.

My grandfather and Tom were cousins, added to that they were brothers-in-law twice over, having married sisters. Shurtle belonged to another branch of the Schofield family, who followed the woollen trade rather than livestock, bakestones or the land. They were mill workers, carders, slubbers,

jinny piecers or weavers. Bill o' Robin's (William Buckley) also known as Bill-at-Bongs, lived at Banks or 'Bongs', a farm quite close to ours. He was getting on, though not really old, lanky and spare built. Once upon a time he had been an engine driver at Rasping Mill at Delph. His wife was one of the Woods of Woodbarn. His two children, Hannah and James, both died in their near twenties of consumption. Bill kept a few cows, churned milk and made and sold butter. He was perhaps the nearest to independence of all our neighbours. Doubtless he had something laid by from his engine-driving days.

To be continued.



IN SEARCH OF THE "STANDEGE ADMIRAL"

This grand title was (unofficially) conferred on Thomas Bourne, who for 37 years supervised the boat traffic through Standedge tunnel. This duty appealed to the public's sense of adventure and Bourne's travels appear in print now and again - of course, as the story gets handed down it becomes a little garbled and this article is an attempt to unravel Bourne's story, while still leaving much unsolved.

Thomas Bourne's father, John, was born in the river port of Bewdley, Worcs. on 22nd October, 1774. Moving north, he married a lady called Betty Lord, a native of Holmfirth, and their son, Thomas, was born at the Cross Keys, Godley, on 24th April, 1799. No trace of this inn has survived, but this could suggest an involvement on the Peak Forest Canal with its tunnels, then being built under Outram's supervision, as John Bourne next appears at Standedge where the three mile tunnel under the Pennines was progressing by fits and starts - another Outram project. He was certainly there by 1807, identified as a miner and dwelling at Redbrook. Another son, James, was born to them and baptised at Marsden on 16th May. Three years later they had moved to another shaft location at Flint Pit - the baptism of another son, John, being recorded on 7th October, 1810..

They were still at Flint Pit the following year when, sadly, little James died. His burial took place on 23rd January 1811. (The family name appears as 'Bourn' in the two latter entries).

The shafts at these sites had been sunk to tunnel level some years before this period and, as far as can be deduced, spoil was being wound up the shafts by water balance engines. Amazingly, Betty is said to have been in charge of one of these. Maybe they occupied one of the three cottages whose remains can still be traced at Redbrook. These shaft sites still have a grim, brooding atmosphere, even though the main A62 road now runs close. What conditions were like for the Bournes can only be imagined. At least they would not be short of water and fresh air.

Upon the tunnel's opening in 1811, Bourne was appointed its first Superintendent, and it seems that John and Betty moved with their family to the area of Tunnel End, Marsden. It looks as if another son was baptised on 29th June, 1812 "James, of John Bourns of Waterside, Boatsman". These minor name variations irritate the historian, but the scrawled entries are a relic of a more casual age, and nobody could be more casual than the Rev. Lancelot Bellas, incumbent of Marsden until 1815. "Waterside" was the name given to the area between the canal and river, later occupied by "Tunnel End Sidings" and now a wooded picnic site. Maybe "Boatsman" was near enough for Bellas to describe the Tunnel Superintendent, a post which John Bourne held until his death on 21st January, 1818. His burial is recorded at Marsden on the 25th his abode then being "Tunnel Mouth".

The tunnel's official opening took place with ceremony on Thursday, 4th April, 1811, and immediately it seems John's son, Thomas, was at the age of 12 put in the responsible position of traffic regulator. A rota of round the clock working was adopted, boats being admitted within certain hours at Marsden, after which the tunnel keeper would make sure no others entered - possibly by winding a chain across the mouth, the windlass at each end still being visible until fairly recent times. A similar arrangement held good at Diggle, and the system continued for many years with minor changes to the timings of the "turns".

Due to a decision made eleven years after construction began, there was no towpath through the tunnel, boats being legged through, though unloaded craft

could be propelled through by men walking the length of the boat as they pushed against the walls with poles. Boat horses were led over the top, though it is said that an experienced horse could be set off on its own to find its way over Standedge. Nothing of this appears in the Minutes of the Huddersfield Canal Co., but Thomas himself can speak to us from a letter written after his retirement and which still survives. Quoted word for word: "The first Boat Came through the Canall Came on Tuesday Morning March 26, 1811, And I Travled 37 yrs. Withen 8 Dayes, Backwards and Forwards 4 Times a Day Sundays an All unless the Canall Was Stopt and Carid Many Thousands of Money over and Never Was a Penny Short Nor Longer in my hands than is help - Thomas Bourne". What experience is contained in those few lines - Bourne was proud of his achievement. If only he could have told us more of the details. Was Thomas employed to lead the horses, to report on the numbers of boats, to convey the Company's toll money (for a tunnel toll was exacted)? When did he find his rest? This job would turn a sturdy and trustworthy lad into a man indeed.

Change was in the air at Standedge in the mid 1840's, with the Huddersfield Canal Co. becoming the "Huddersfield and Manchester Rly. & Canal Co." (later part of the L. & N.W.R.). The first railway tunnel was set out 50 feet south of the canal tunnel, with much of the spoil being moved out by boat via some 30 adits sloping down to the canal. The normal trade boats had to operate as well, and in January 1847 a modified set of tunnel rules appeared. Times were set down at four hourly intervals, all round the clock, and alternately from east and west ends for boats to enter, entry being permitted for up to 15 minutes after the appointed hour. In other words, a convoy of boats was allowed 3.3/4 hours to pass through Standedge. Boatmen were warned against interfering with any 'Stakes, Rods or other Marks used in setting out the Railway Tunnel.' A light had to be carried at the bow of each boat, but fires on board were strictly forbidden. In July two convictions were reported for cases of passing the tunnel with fires lit and bills were posted making this public knowledge. The system must not have worked out, as new rules were drawn up in August. The main points of these were (a) Trade boats could not use the tunnel between about 9 p.m. and 2 a.m. - presumably the spoil was brought out during the night and (b) the heaviest laden boat of a 'convoy' should enter first and be accompanied by one of the Company's agents.

Further changes to the rules took effect in October, but a major alteration was minuted on 1st March, 1848 "Water Agents at each end of the Tunnel to be provided with Certificate Books - Certificates to be given to last Boat at each Turn entering Tunnel, also a red signal lamp, and the practice of sending a man through with the boats to be discontinued." Judging by the date, this would appear to coincide with the end of Bourne's journeys over Standedge.

Thomas was believed to have been involved with the boat horses in some way after his travelling ended. He died on 22nd August, 1851, at Marsden, it is said, though his burial is not recorded there, nor does he appear in that year's Marsden Census. Details of Thomas' marriage are obscure, but he appears to have fathered five daughters and four sons between 1821 and 1844. One of these was James, born 1833 and apprenticed to a Marsden builder. Bad trade in that area sent him to the other side of Standedge where he finally settled in 1851. Mr. James Bourne was involved with many local organisations and as a successful builder was responsible for much of Greenfield as we see it today. He made two marriages, his second wife believed a cousin of the first, and fathered 13 children between 1859 and 1887. The account of his funeral in 1911 gives us some particulars of his grandfather, John, but tells us little about his father, Thomas.

Tunnel work brought tragedy to this generation of the family when James' elder brother, William, was killed by an explosion while working in the second Woodhead tunnel in 1849, the same year that saw 28 of his workmates die in a few weeks in an epidemic of cholera.

The railway under Standedge opened on 1st August, 1849. A telegraph line through the tunnel connected Marsden and Saddleworth stations, Diggle not being opened until later. In December, 1849, a Canal Committee minute records a "plan for making the Telegraph available for Canal purposes-to be adopted." Corrosion caused problems and the wires were rerouted over the top of Standedge in 1861. Certainly by 1867 the telegraph was serving to control boat movements, as recalled by Mr. Ben Brierley writing in the 'Oldham Chronicle' in 1949 of events at Diggle remembered from the age of seven - "The canal tunnel was in daily use and the man in charge at the Diggle end had to come to the station signal box to find out if any boats were entering the tunnel at the Marsden end."

This possibly meant that use could be made of the 'wides' at intervals in the tunnel for boats to pass, provided the messages were correctly passed on and understood. The boatmen could be told to go as far as some location with a mysterious name such as "Hell Kettle" or "Old Judy" and there wait for a boat to pass. The iron 'tablet numbers' in the roof at 50 yard intervals would serve to confirm the intended rendezvous, but one can imagine the echoing shouts and curses if boats met head on.

More leisure and literacy led to a general interest in the tunnels, as expressed in a letter to the "Manchester Courier" from Mr. John Bower of Saddleworth, dated 17th October, 1876. Part of this is based on the notes written by Bourne himself, quoted earlier, but added to this we learn that "It has been calculated that he travelled 215,852 miles." Who made this estimate we are not told, but it would seem to be based on a distance of four miles between Marsden and Diggle, maybe about right for a route we do not know with certainty. When we begin to equate it with days we run into trouble. 13,491 days x 4 journeys x 4 miles gives a total of 215,856. Bourne's "37 years less 8 days" would, with allowance for 10 leap years, equal 13,507 days, but these speculations are pretty pointless when we note "Unless the Canall was Stopt" although it would be interesting to know the basis for the figure.

Of course, Bourne's career would appeal to Ammon Wrigley who, I feel sure, would have loved the job himself. In 1901 Ammon came out with "Annals of Saddleworth" with an entry marking Bourne's retirement in 1848. His alleged mileage appears as 215,845. John Bower's letter was quoted in full some 50 or 60 years later in a newspaper letter from Mr. Arthur Hall of Oldham, in reply to some earlier comments by Ammon. However, the date of 26th March, 1811, for the first boat through was now reproduced as the 20th.

In 1937 Ammon Wrigley published "Those Were the Days", a lively account of Saddleworth ways and characters. One chapter was entitled "Two Standedge Tunnels" and straight away we are told that the canal tunnel opened on 20th March, 1811; so does "recorded history" stumble along. I cannot do better than simply to quote Ammon in full: "Thomas Bourne, of Marsden, was born in 1799, and was 12 years of age when he was appointed to take charge of the boats that passed through the tunnel. They entered it alternately from each end, every four hours, and young Bourne had to go over Standedge moors four times a day for seven days in the week. The road rises to over 1,200 feet above the sea level and whether he walked or rode on slow, lumbering boat horses, he would know more about rough weather than any man in the two parishes. He must have been a big, strong lad to have stood the hardships of the journey, day after day, and year after year.

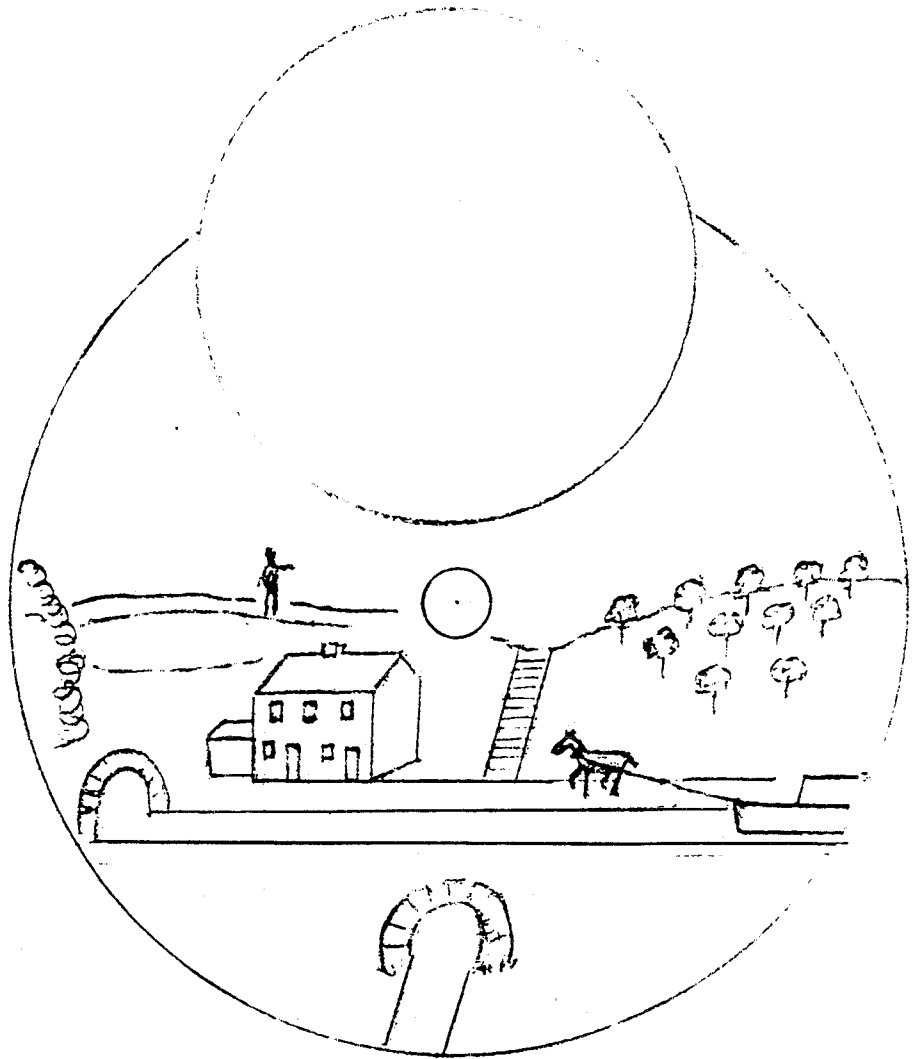
Four times a day, climbing over those storm-beaten heights in the depth of winter. How often would he wade through drifted snows, battling his way against a fierce north east blizzard, and how often in rainy weather he would reach Diggle and Marsden drenched to the skin. It almost makes one shiver to think about it.

Yet, Thomas Bourne did the work for 37 years, and one cannot help but regret that he did not keep a diary and leave a record of his canal life, all he had seen, known and endured. His life would be crowded with rich experiences, weatherings, meetings with stage coach travellers on the road and at the inns, now and then an adventure with a footpad, the rude, rough life on the canal boats and the devil-may-care characters he had met amongst the boatmen and their womenfolk from 1811 to 1848. He is said to have travelled nearly 216,000 miles over Standedge moors."

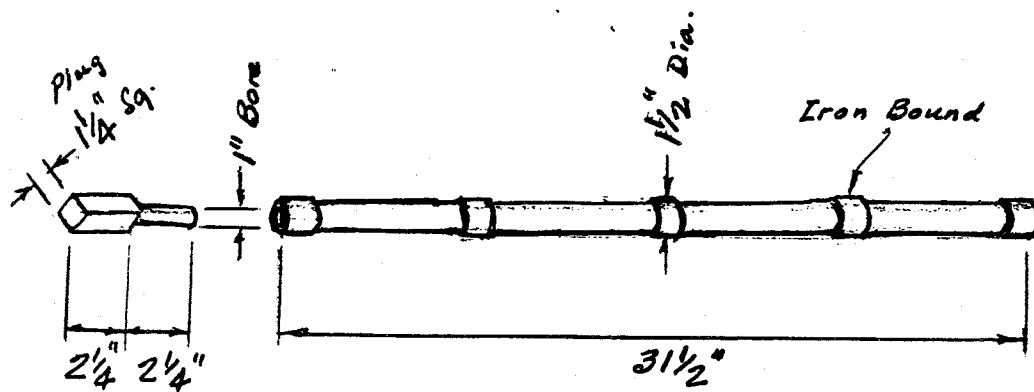
Meanwhile, the tunnel had "closed" though this closure is not easy to define. In 1916, for instance, the passage of a trade boat was rare enough to attract attention from the press, and the last one recorded passed through from Diggle to Marsden in 1921. Powers to close the Huddersfield Canal were contained in the L.M.S. Canals Act of 1944; in 1948 the now famous journey of "Ailsa Craig" with Rolt and Aickman was made through the tunnel. This trip most likely prompted the decision to remove the lock gates all along the canal some two years later. This seemed like the final death knell and gave rise to a few nostalgic press reports. A "Colne Valley Guardian" item in August 1951 tells us that "The late Mr. Thomas Bourne, grandfather of Mr. William Rhodes of Greenfield, came from Worcester" and goes on to describe his journeyings. A similar item appeared in the "Oldham Evening Chronicle" the following month, but Bourne is simply described as a Marsden man.

In October, 1955, a fascinating little item appeared in the "Huddersfield Examiner" - a photograph of a miniature grandfather, or long case clock, the dial being a watch enclosed in the case. On the face of the watch was a painting of the Standedge Tunnel, and the text tells us that it was presented to a Marsden man who regulated the boat traffic. Bourne was not named, but the clock was said to be in the possession of a Marsden family. The particulars of his job tally with those in the 1876 letter, except that the red lamp of 1848 was not mentioned. The telegraph was said to have come into use that year for boat regulation. Another bit of careless reporting.

August 1957 and the "Mossley & Saddleworth Reporter" carried an article about the canal. Thomas Bourne appears again, and is now said to have been a native of Saddleworth, living at Marsden, but then we are told that "Mr. Bourne was the Superintendent in charge of the construction of Standedge Canal Tunnel, and was a relative of Mr. James Bourne, a Greenfield contractor, who was uncle to Councillor B. Dransfield, a public man for over 40 years." Certainly some confusion here. The author goes on to quote Bourne's alleged mileage, saying that he "had to walk over." Then follows a strange tale and I can do no better than quote it as written: "An interesting story concerning Mr. Thomas Bourne is told by Mr. William Rhodes of 65 Chew Valley Road, Greenfield, uncle to Mr. Hervey Rhodes, M.P. for Ashton. "One day" says Mr. Rhodes, "Mr. Bourne accidentally dropped his snuffbox which was engraved with his initials, into the Marsden end of the canal, which at the time was full of water. A drummer-up boy noticed the incident and there it might have ended. However, many years later the canal at this point was drained off for repairs and the snuffbox was found. By a coincidence, the drummer-up box was the foreman in charge of the work. He recognised the snuffbox as the one which Mr. Bourne had lost and brought it to Mr. James Bourne at Greenfield, who offered the man a golden sovereign for it, but the foreman thought the find worth more, so he replaced it in his pocket and returned to Marsden, hoping that eventually Mr. Bourne would increase his offer".



DETAIL OF WATCH FACE - PRESENTED TO THOMAS
BOURNE, THE "STANDEGE ADMIRAL" UPON HIS
RETIREMENT IN 1848. (4 x FULL SIZE)



JOHN BOURNE'S FUSE CARRYING CASE

Mr. Rhodes was with Mr. Bourne when the snuffbox was brought to Greenfield and he held it in his own hands. "It was in a good state of preservation" he says.

"A short time afterwards" adds Mr. Rhodes, "when the canal had been filled up again, the snuffbox fell from the foreman's pocket back into the canal at the same spot and was never seen again."

The years following 1957 saw a succession of chartered society trips through the tunnel which were quite easy to arrange until the last of all took place on 1st April 1967. Many of these voyagers got a set of historical notes along with their trip, and sometimes Bourne's travels got a mention. It was in this era that his title of "Standedge Admiral" seems to have come to light.

Some interest was aroused in the spring of 1991, when the Huddersfield Examiner carried an account of the Railway & Canal Historical Society's trip 30 years before (this trip marking the 150th anniversary of the tunnel's opening). Soon after this the 1955 item about the miniature grandfather clock was resurrected, and the question asked - where was the clock now?

Then in May, Mrs. Elsie Pollard, formerly Bourne, of Marsden, declared that the watch was still in her family's possession and that she was Thomas' great, great granddaughter. Mrs. Pollard's mother, Alice, "kept the watch for years in an old OXO tin" along with a press cutting which described Bourne's job. Alice's husband was Mr. James Harry Bourne, a mason on the canal who was responsible for the Sparth Reservoir spillway, amongst other works. She used to recount to young Elsie how her husband's great grandfather, Thomas "used to have to get up at half past four in a morning to go to work." It is interesting to note here that Alice's grandfather, James Schofield, had a railway job which involved walking regularly through the old single line tunnel at Standedge, although he was lame and walked with a stick. He is to be seen on the well known photograph of witnesses assembled at Marsden station in 1908, en route to Leeds for the court hearing which established right of way on the old packhorse road over Clowes Moor. He stands leaning on his stick at the far left of the group.

The watch was traced to Mrs. Pollard's brother, Mr. Harold Bourne, now living at Guiseley. I was warmly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Bourne, who were glad to hear of the interest now shown in Standedge, its tunnels and its Admiral. The treasured watch was produced, although its 'grandfather clock' case has now vanished, together with any inscription there may have been, but a picture can tell more than a thousand words, and the picture on the watch's face brings history suddenly to life - a horse-drawn boat is approaching the Marsden end of the tunnel, and up on the banking Bourne stands beside Tunnel End Reservoir with an arm raised in farewell as he sets off, on foot, for Diggle.

Tunnel End Cottages look much as today, except that the upper storey shows three windows instead of the four existing now. (The masonry shows no sign of alteration, probably artist's licence). How well the colours have lasted, and how proud the artist would be if he could see his work today.

We notice the overflow from the reservoir flows steeply down the banking beside the cottages to pass under the canal and form the infant River Colne. This is how it must have looked in those early years, for to quote the Minutes of the Canal Company's General Assembly, 23rd August, 1822, "The plan of Mr. Raistrick's to convey wastewater from Marsden Reservoir over the tunnel mouth instead of under the canal as formerly, to be effected, and the land bought." When this was actually carried out is another matter. The pace of action following Committee or Assembly decisions was not dramatic

on the Huddersfield Canal. Certainly the artist must have been inspired by the prospect well before Bourne's retirement in 1848 for, as we have seen, the first railway tunnel was nearly complete by then, and the foreground of his delightful scene would be obscured by the railway with the water now passing over the canal tunnel top and culverted beneath the railway banking. Examination of modern drawings of the culverts in the area suggest that the present run-off from the canal opposite the cottages could have been designed to bend round and meet the old reservoir culvert. Oddly enough, modern plans to alter the reservoir outlet have proposed something similar to the original design, passing through concrete pipes and under the canal.

Another daughter of James Harry Bourne and Alice, is Ada, who remembers making a trip through the canal tunnel with her father at the age of about ten. Her husband, Mr. James Clark, spent seventeen years working in Standedge with the permanent way gangs, and has graphic memories of the constant work involved in keeping the water pick-up troughs clear of debris and packing them up to maintain the critical 1.9/16" rail surface up to water level. In Mr. Clark's possession was a chisel inscribed with the name of Oliver Bourne, father of James Harry and grandson of the "Standedge Admiral."

It can be said here that a cousin to this branch of the family is Mr. Donald Sykes, who had nearly 30 years service on the Huddersfield Canal, being in charge at the Marsden depot on his retirement in 1988.

Further contacts were made with Bourne's descendants and fascinating items came to light. One was a fine long case clock, constructed by Wm. Tarleton of Liverpool (better known as a watch maker) and said to date from 1775. This is understood to have belonged to John Bourne who was owed some money by the Canal Company but got the clock instead. It is reputed to have been transported by boat through the tunnel.

A fine relic of canal tunnel construction days is a wooden fuse carrying case, once used by John Bourne. Some 30" long and 1" bore, it has a tightly fitting plug and would serve to keep the coiled lengths of fuse (with black powder sealed into the fabric) safe from sparks or water in the dangerous conditions beneath Standedge.

To retrace young Thomas Bourne's steps today provides a fine walk. Begin at Marsden Tunnel End, stand on the footbridge over the canal and look across to the cottages. It is easy to visualise the cascade coming down the banking and under the canal, as depicted on the old watch face. The display inside the cottages recounts the story of the four Standedge tunnels and much else, such as natural history, etc. Climb the steps leading up the reservoir banking, and across the road, over the wall can be seen traces of that first outlet from the reservoir.

What route would Bourne and the boat horses follow? "Boat Lane" is no mystery as it winds down from Brun Clough Reservoir to Diggle, although its maintenance has always been a mystery - was it made by the Canal Company for the horses and, if so should British Waterways pay for its repair? More in doubt is its route up from Marsden. Modern signposting has established a route for hikers to follow, but what relation does this bear to the "Boat Lane" which Bourne knew? Bear in mind that the third Wakefield & Austerlands Trunpike (present A62) was only made about 1838, around the north side of Pule Hill; maybe it followed the old boat horse route from Tunnel End.

Our walk gives fine views of the old shafts, spoil heaps and reservoirs, and the dramatic cutting at the A62 summit, 1270 ft. above sea level. To describe it properly would call for a separate article. Much that

John and Thomas Bourne would recognise is still there. We cross the Pennine Way, right on the backbone of England, and descend to Diggle on what is now part of the "Oldham Way".

What a fine name for a pub would be "The Standedge Admiral". Changes of name are not unknown along this road, and what a splendid sign could be painted for it. Would the spelling of "Standedge" or "Stanedge" be once more a cause of cross-border bickering? Maybe at any rate, one day we may sit in a "Standedge Admiral" hikers' snug and drink a health to "Admiral" Thomas Bourne, his father, John, and all their descendants.

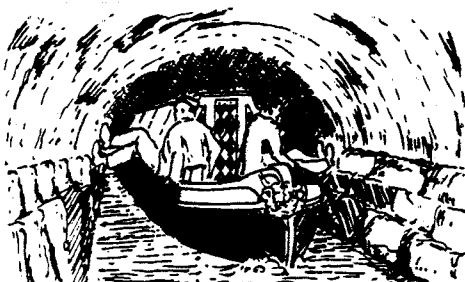
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For help with the above article I am indebted to several members of the Bourne family and their relatives by marriage. Also to material held by the Public Records Office, by the libraries of Huddersfield, Manchester and Oldham, to Saddleworth Museum and to the "Huddersfield Examiner". Further help is acknowledged from Messrs. N. Fraser, J. Goodchild, G. Holroyd and Peter and Michael Fox.

It is hoped that this article will prompt a few reactions in the form of additions and corrections, as there are clearly gaps to be filled. The author is engaged in research with a view to a book on "Standedge", its tunnels, roads and reservoirs, and will always be grateful for any help towards this. Contacts with old railway/canal men with experience of working in the tunnels would be especially welcome.

Addendum

Since this article was typed, Geoff Brown has unearthed more information on Thomas Bourne. He was married on 11th April 1824 to Alpha Longdin of Rotherham. He appears to have fathered five daughters and four sons in the years up to 1844.



THE JOINING TOGETHER OF TWO OLD SADDLEWORTH FAMILIES IN 1881

BY W. DONALD KERSHAW
C. ENG., F.I. STRUCT. E.

In 1881 two old Saddleworth families were joined together by the wedding between Alice Jane Heginbottom whose family goes back nearly 300 years, and William Eastwood, whose family goes back over 200 years.

The Heginbottom Saddleworth lineage started in 1721 when that illustrious character the Rev. John Heginbottom M.A. (Oxon) (1695 - 1771), and his wife, Martha, arrived in Saddleworth. He was to be Minister of St. Chad's - Saddleworth Church - for 50 years. His escapades are too numerous and well known to be mentioned here. Next came his son, William, (1727 - 1817), Clothier of Wellhead. Many readers will remember that in his 90th year he walked 32 miles to see his great great grandson; also that he was buried at St. Thomas's Church, Friarmere in the evening by torchlight; and present were nine of his ten children and 59 of his 131 grandchildren and a large number of other relations, friends and domestics. Then next was Williams's son, James, (1758 - 1825), Clothier and later cotton spinner of Horest. Then James's son, Thomas, (1793 - 1848), cotton spinner, later grocer, of Old Tame. Then Thomas's son, James, (1822 - ?), Manager of Oldham. Then next came James's daughter, Alice Jane, (1855 - 1916), who, in 1880-81, lived with her two sisters in Greenfield; all three of whom were school teachers.

The Eastwood Saddleworth lineage started in the 1780's when Jonas Eastwood, (1745 - 1826), and his wife Rebecca, arrived in Saddleworth bringing with them a dying tradition. Since then until the 1950's, at various times and including other premises, the family owned or part owned the following: Walk Mill Dye Works, Dobcross; Oak View Mill, Greenfield; Heybottoms Mill, Greenfield; Wall Hill Mill (Eastwood and Carr Ltd.), Dobcross. A member of the Eastwood family, dressed in the uniform of a Saddleworth Volunteer, is illustrated, with others, on the front cover of a recent issue of the Bulletin. (What are his initials? Where does he fit in the Eastwood family tree?).

In 1881 William Eastwood, (1856 - 1925), whose father was Thomas Eastwood (1828 - 1901), owner of Oak View Mill and Heybottoms Mill, fell in love, and at Saddleworth Church on the 2nd November 1881 he married Alice Jane Heginbottom. At the age of 25 he took his bride to Norway where he was to manage, for the rest of his working life, part of a new woollen mill in Berger, a small, pretty sea-side village about 40 miles south west of Oslo. They became naturalized Norwegian citizens and died there having raised a family of eight children.

Although William loved his life in Norway, Alice Jane never stopped pining for England and her Heginbottom family. She sent two of her daughters to England to live with an aunt in Uppermill, a daughter of James Heginbottom, in the hope that she may some day follow and live with one of them. Unfortunately she died in 1916 before this could happen. She was cremated - very unusual in those days - and brought home to England in a casket - even more unusual - and interred in Chadderton Cemetery with some of her Heginbottom family.

A large number of the Heginbottom - Eastwood descendants still live in Norway. One of them, John Eastwood, was in the war-time Norwegian resistance. Another, Frank Eastwood, was in the peace-time Norwegian army.

From time to time, numerous members of the Norwegian Eastwood family have visited Saddleworth. One of them, Ernest Eastwood, together with the author of this article, who lives in Southampton, have joined the Saddleworth Historical Society so that both in Norway and Southampton they can continue hearing about their heritage and the fascinating Saddleworth history.

Regarding the two daughters who Alice Jane sent to England. One was named Gladys and the other Alice Wilhelmena. Gladys married Reginald Leach. (His father was Arther Leach, a well

known Saddleworth tailor. His mother was Bertha Hewkin). They had one son, Geoffrey, and one daughter, Barbara.

Alice Wilhelmena married Walter Kershaw. (His father was Ben Kershaw, who before the war, some of the older readers may remember, was organist at Saddleworth Church for many years. His mother was Mary Hewkin, sister of Bertha). They had five children, three of whom have survived; Derrick, Vera and the author Donald. All were born in or near Saddleworth where they lived for a number of years.

The offsprings of Gladys and Alice Wilhelmena are therefore not only descendants of the Heginbottoms and Eastwoods but also that well known Saddleworth family of the Hewkins.

As with most genealogical lines there are a number of gaps and mysteries in the Eastwood and the more recent Heginbottom ancestry. If any reader has any knowledge of the incidents, people or properties mentioned above, the author would be delighted to hear from them.

Most of the earlier Heginbottom information given above was extracted from a letter to the Bulletin Editor in 1977 from J. A. Higinbottom of Halifax, who has a very comprehensive computer file of the Heginbottom family, from the 16th century yeomen farmers to fairly recent times. He has kindly agreed to the inclusion of this information in this article.



SADDLEWORTH CHURCH.

The illustration depicts St. Chad's Church as it appeared in the 1820s, immediately before it was reconstructed to its present day form. The Reverend Heginbottom ministered in this building for many years.

(Taken from the title page of James Butterworth's "A History and Description of the Parochial Chapelry of Saddleworth" - Manchester, 1828).

SEARCHLIGHT POSITIONS AROUND SADDLEWORTH - Part 2.

The first article appeared in S.H.S. Bulletin Vol. 21. No. 2. and since then I have been able to identify and locate further sites. Information has also been obtained from local residents and men serving in the Territorial Army at that time:-

The Sites

It is almost certain that there were not as many sites as originally thought. Three sites in Saddleworth have now been positively identified, and evidence still exists on the ground:-

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Chew Mount | - concrete plinth (as referred to in previous article). |
| Grasscroft | - concrete and rubble (plus photographs). |
| Near Horse and Jockey Public House | - concrete bases for huts and earth |

Three further locations have been identified in the Oldham area:-

- Top o' th' Dog - off Buckstones Road, Shaw.
- Alexandra Park, Oldham.
- Tandle Hill Farm, Royton.

Two locations have been identified in Tameside:-

- N.E. side of Boating Lake, Stamford Park.
- Little Moss, near former Lumb Mill, Droylsden.

In addition, I have been advised that there were sites in Manchester at Hulme Hall Lane (Miles Patting), Broadhurst Park and Heaton Park, and also at a site in Heywood.

The interesting thing is that when these sites are plotted on a map, they are equally spaced at about 5,000 metres, along parallel lines running east-west. These parallel lines are also about 5,000 metres apart, and the logical conclusion is that the sites were located in a 'grid'. See Fig.1.

Coincidentally, the spacing of 5,000 metres is about half the "ideal spacing" of 10,400 yards (9,510 metres) recommended in 1940.

The two sites at Chew and Broadhurst Park appear to be on a different grid, and I surmise that, in the case of Chew, this was because it was the only point of the moors accessible by vehicles, and in the case of Broadhurst Park, that it was an alternative site well clear of the aircraft manufacturer, A.V.Roe (now British Aerospace).

Establishing the Sites

There is a very interesting account of how six sites were established, in the book "My War" by the late Eric Barber, M.B.E., who was a Troop Sergeant Major in 463 Battery of the Searchlight Regiment. The following is an abstract from it:

SEARCHLIGHTS

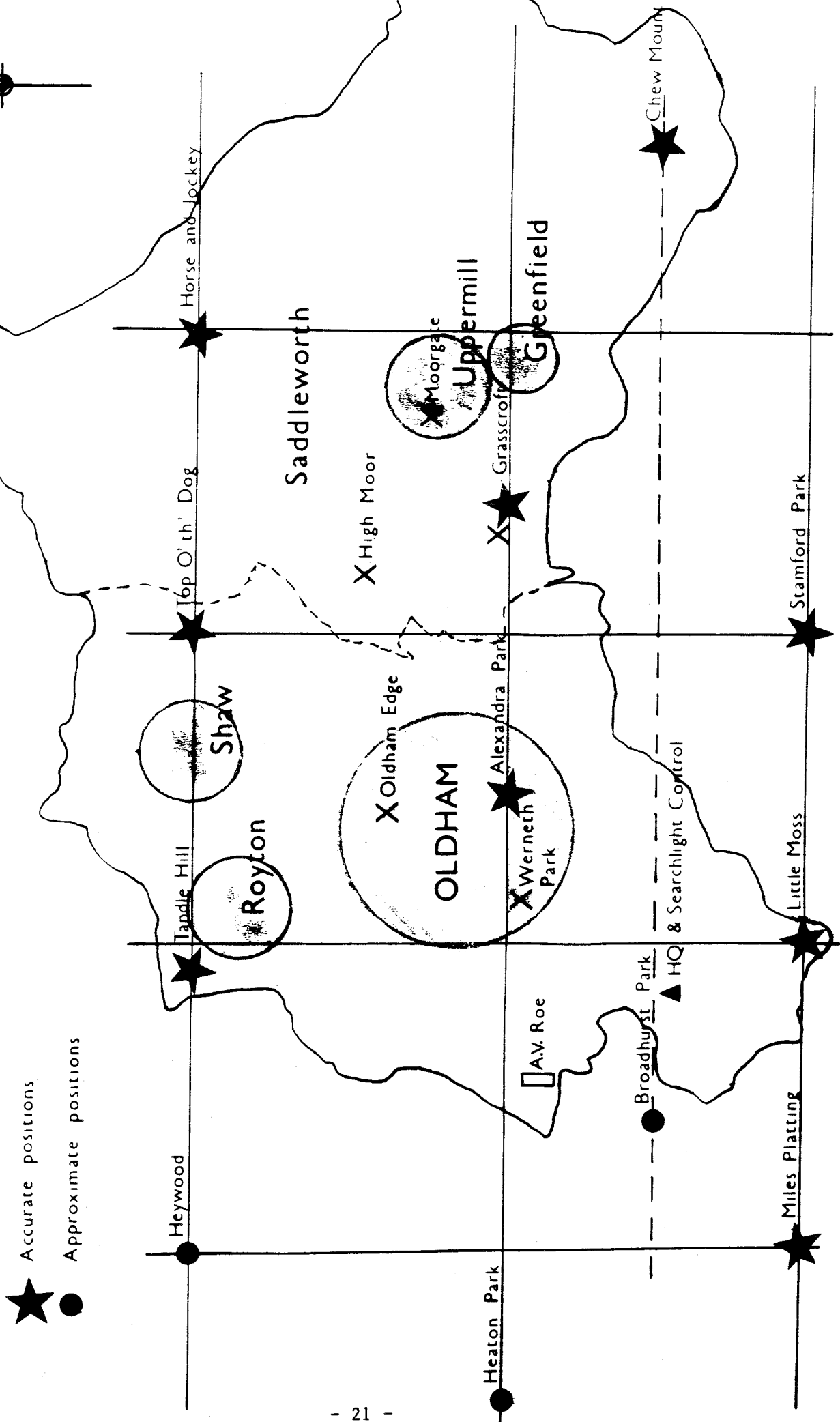


Figure 1

"In the afternoon (of 24th August, 1939) he (his boss) sent for me to say that, following a telephone call from my mother, I had to go home immediately.... Upon arriving home I found an official looking blue form dated that day and delivered by Army despatch rider. I had been called up."

(Author's Note: A copy of one of these blue forms sent to K. Clarke is printed with this article.)

"I said goodbye to my tearful mother and boarded a bus for Failsworth. Even now I marvel at an organisation which could accept so many individuals, sort them out, then disgorge them as disciplined units to proceed to their allotted tasks... I left the Drill Hall at 9.00 p.m. in the sole charge of six detachments... I had six map references and a pad of requisition forms, the latter giving me full powers to requisition the site indicated, if necessary. I was also authorised to obtain full civilian Police assistance, if and when required.

The six sites I had to occupy were at Broadhurst Park, Moston; The Red Rec. Miles Platting (a red shale recreation area); Werneth Park, Oldham; Stamford Park, Ashton-under-Lyne and two fairly steep hills on the edge of the Pennines; Tandle Hill Farm, Royton and Lydgate Farm, Mossley. I had briefed each of the N.C.O's. on his destination ... (He then drove to the sites at Werneth Park, Broadhurst Park and Miles Platting).

At Stamford Park, Ashton, No. 4. Detachment were well advanced, the equipment and tents almost ready. ... I completed the formalities with the park-keeper and handed him the usual requisition, duly authorised... I went on to No. 5. site at Tandle Hill. The time was just 24.00 hours as I drove carefully up a muddy cart track. (The proposed site was in a hollow and it was agreed to move it 250 yards north to avoid flooding). I then left to drive to the last site which was at Lydgate, on top of another steep hill. The farmer there also proved to be most helpful and the site N.C.O. was nearly settled in, having arranged all those things conducive to a harmonious stay."

Mr. Barber refers in his book to a site in Werneth Park but, as yet, I have no other information about it. Several people have, however, described a site to me in Alexandra Park - on the bonfire/exhibition area.

In relation to the site at Lydgate, Lydgate Farm is in Lydgate, and not Mossley, but the area used was the spoil heap from the railway tunnel and this was in Grasscroft! I understand that this site was originally to have been lower down the hill, in Sharon Meadow, and this would, in fact, have been nearer the grid-line referred to earlier. There was obviously a certain amount of flexibility permitted in establishing the sites.

Some local residents also think there may have been sites at Oldham Edge; High Moor, Scouthead; alongside the White Hart Pub, Lydgate and at Moorgate, Uppermill. I have no further information in relation to these sites, but have marked them on Fig.1. It is, of course, possible that these sites were used temporarily or for other military purposes.

How long were the sites used ?

It appears that some of the sites were used for less than 12 months and the rapid redeployment of troops is described by Mr. Barber, as follows:

"One Thursday, in the early summer of 1940, I was summoned to B.H.Q. and there told that I was to report, with my Troop, to

Not to be maintained in duplicate.

Army Form E 623

TERRITORIAL ARMY.

(COAST DEFENCE AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT UNITS.)

IMMEDIATE AND IMPORTANT.—NOTICE TO JOIN.

No., Rank and Name 1436837

Clarke K

Unit 463 RF 7th SL Rgt. RATA

Whereas in the present national emergency the Secretary of State has authorised the calling out of officers and men of { Coast Defence } units of Anti-Aircraft the Territorial Army in accordance with agreements entered into by them under Section 13 (2) (b) of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907, you are hereby required to report immediately at the

Drill Hall

Should you not present yourself as ordered, you will be liable to be proceeded against.

Place Fairwood

M. J. P.

Adjutant, Captain, R.A.

Time

A/ Adjutant 71st Searchlight Regt., R.A.,

Date 24 AUG. 1939

Unit.

*Strike out the words not applicable.

N.B.—This notice to be sent by hand or by registered post in a plain envelope. (A.F. D419 will not be used).

(701) W.C. 3392, 1517 70,000 10/38 L.S. H.W. Ltd. Gp. 498 Forms/E623/8

Failsworth within 24 hours (by 1100 hours the next day, Friday). Where possible we had to reinstate our sites to as near their original condition as we could. I spent all that day visiting sites and straightening out any of the many problems that cropped up. It called for real effort from all the N.C.O's. and their men, but it was done. Several of us had no sleep that night."

On the Saturday morning Mr. Barber and his Troop set off to Lincolnshire to establish six searchlight positions on the East Coast.

The other Saddleworth sites may also have been abandoned at the same time but, if not, they would probably have gone by early 1941 when the Searchlight Regiment had been deployed to coastal areas in Lincolnshire, Liverpool and Orkney. By 1943, when the Regiment was disbanded, the units were operating on the South Coast.

There were apparently no large gun emplacements in Saddleworth, and therefore no enemy aircraft shot down. The nearest gun batteries, with four 3.7 inch guns at each, were Heaton Park, Broadhurst Park and Melland Playing Fields near Belle Vue.

The reason for searchlights in this area was obviously to protect Manchester, but in particular it was evidently assumed that as German pilots had helped fly KLM (Dutch) aircraft, they would fly the route they were familiar with, which was over Chew and along the valley to Manchester. In addition, there were important firms to protect, such as, Platt Bros. and A.V.Roe.

The searchlights were also used to guide Allied aircraft back to bases at Ringway and Speke. The Allied aircraft displayed 3 lights (Colours of the Day) and flashed a morse code (which was changed twice daily for security). If all the instruments on the aircraft had been damaged, they would fire flares. On receiving the order to assist an Allied aircraft, such as "Feed pigeons on Ringway" the light would be repeatedly pointed vertically and then in the direction of the airfield.

It also appears that some lights may have been more powerful than indicated in my earlier article, viz: 7,000,000 candle power and a range of 7 miles.

Locations of the sites in Saddleworth

The location of the site at Chew Mount was referred to in S.H.S. Bulletin Vol. 20. No. 3. and was alongside the embankment of Chew Reservoir.

The location of the other two sites are shown on the plans at Figs. 2 and 3.

Anecdotes

Researching for this article has brought out some interesting stories such as:

The "cook" on the Lydgate (Grasscroft) site who had no sense of smell and was boiling potatoes in a dixie filled with petrol - and over an open wood fire! He had poured the "water" in from the wrong can!

Part of the test for an Army Driving Instructor was an ability to stop a 30 cwt. truck at the bottom of a hill using the gears only, no brakes.

The sneaking off of some personnel from the Lydgate site to visit the Grotton Hotel for a drink.

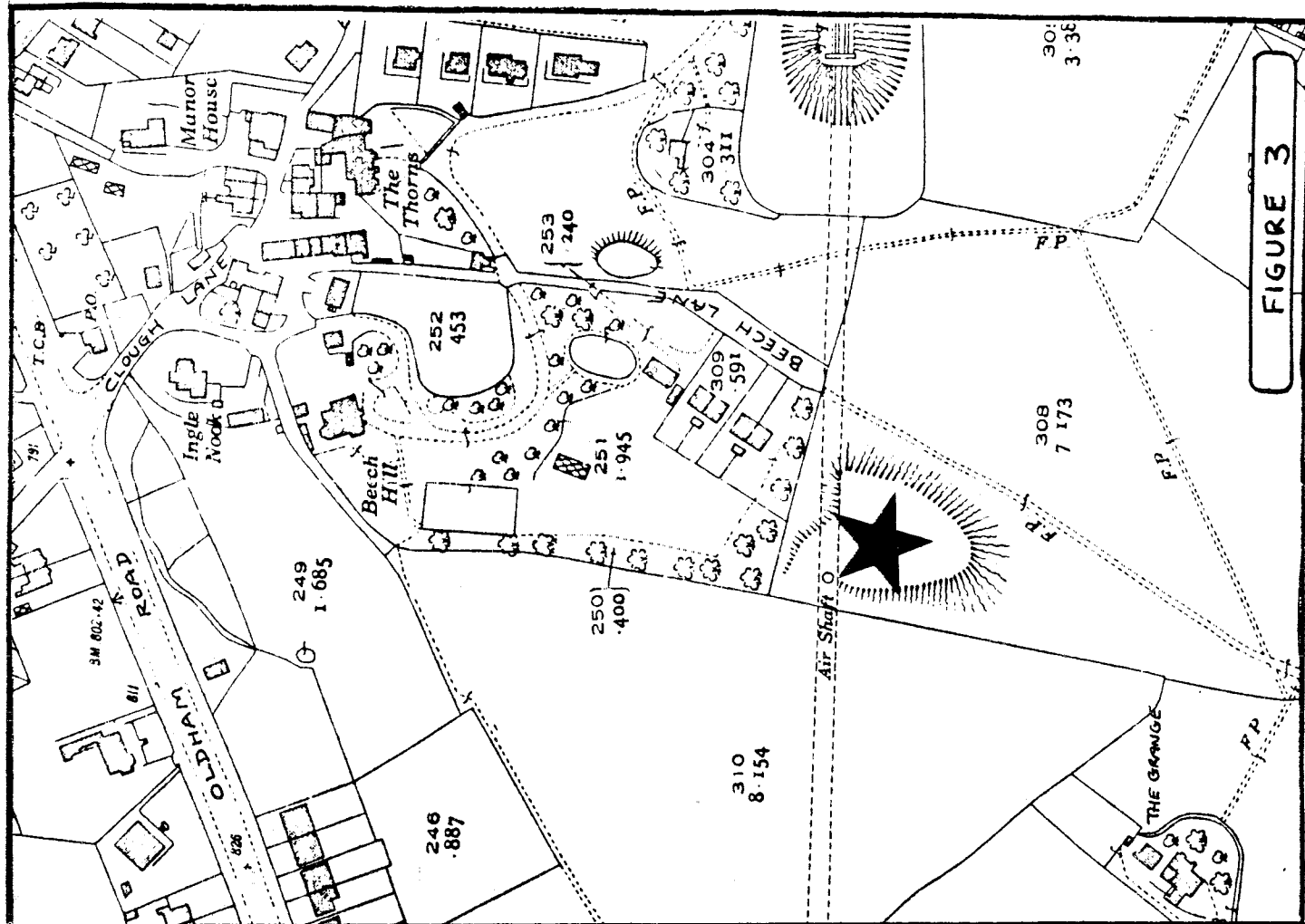


FIGURE 3

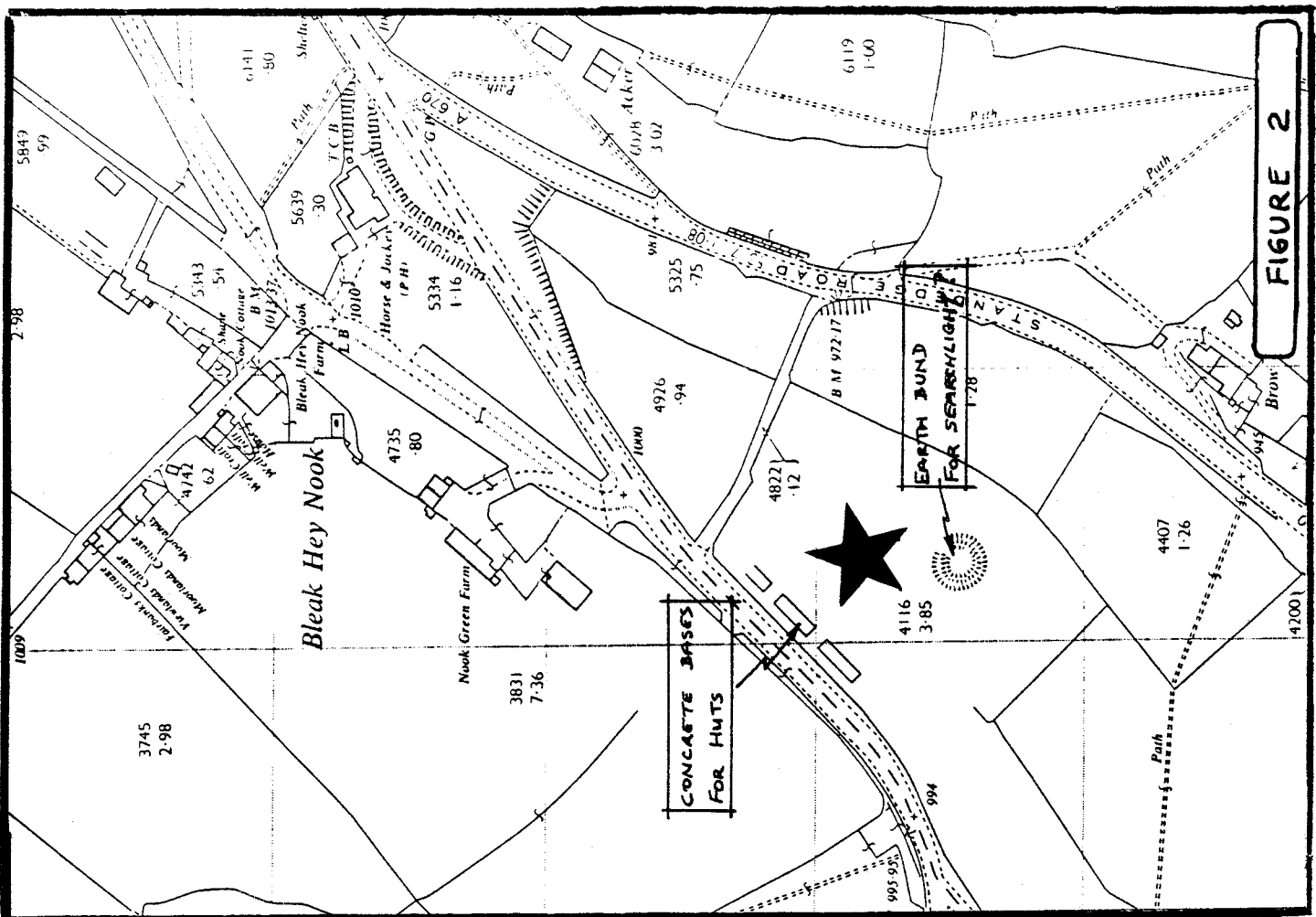


FIGURE 2

That the 'sand' bags at Chew were filled with peat and would not therefore have stopped any bullets fired at them.

The exchanging, with local women, of army rations of bully beef for home-made bread and scones, etc.

The early sound locators could not be switched off so it was extremely noisy for the operators when the gun was fired nearby.

- - - - -

Further information on the Searchlights would still be welcome.

Kevin Lawton,
7 Woodhead Close,
Lees,
Oldham,
OL4 3JS.

Telephone: 061 624 0010.

References

Personal recollections of men who served in the Searchlight Regiment.

"My War" by E.S. Barber, M.B.E.

LETTERS

The Editor,
Saddleworth Historical Society.

3rd January, 1992.

Dear Mr. Fox,

I am seeking to extend my knowledge of the family history and descendants of my great-great-grandfather, Captain Thomas Gartside (1777-1859) of Friarmere Lodge, Woodbrow, Denshaw, and shall be most interested to hear from anyone who has information or reminiscences about any branch of the Gartside family related to Captain Gartside or his brother, John (1771-1852) whose son, John Gartside (1810-1868) founded Gartsides Breweries, Ashton-under-Lyne.

Yours sincerely,

A.E.G. Wright.

(Mr.) A.E.G. Wright,
120 Melrose Avenue,
LONDON, NW2 4JX.

081 452 2788.

TRACING BY TELETEXT

Members may be interested to learn of a new service offered by Oracle on page 683 of Channel 4 "Teletext". This enables family historians to advertise for missing ancestors or distant relatives by displaying a message of up to fifty words for one week. The service is free of charge. Messages should be sent to:

Oracle Teletext Ltd.,
F.A.O. Lisa - P683,
Classified Dept.,
25-32 Marshall Street,
LONDON,
W1V 1LL.

It is not necessary to have the teletext facility to apply, but applicants are asked to include a day-time number so they can be told when the message is on view.

Howard Lambert,
CHESHAM,
Bucks.

19.11.91.

Enquiries about membership of the Saddleworth Historial 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,
GREENFIELD,
Oldham,
OL3 7LF.

(Saddleworth (0457) 870378)

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 material in the form of articles, letters, short reviews, etc. from members and others interested in the history of the area. Fresh material is constantly required and should be sent to the Editor, who is always pleased to discuss ideas for articles with anyone thinking of contributing. Articles need not be confined to subjects within Saddleworth's borders, but should have some connection with the district.

The Spring "Bulletin" is due for publication on 30th April. All material to the editor by 31st March, please.



SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER WINTER 1991

"There is a spot, 'mid barren hills,
Where winter howls and driving rain,
But, if the dreary tempest chills,
There is a light that warms again."

Emily Bronte.

That light shone brilliantly on Thursday evening 23rd January, 1992, at the Museum when society member, Alan Petford gave us a fascinating talk entitled, 'Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. The Rise of Elementary Education in Saddleworth', and then proceeded to describe in a great wealth of detail the full influence of the various patrons establishing the various schools and the effects of religion, politics and local finances upon these schools. His slides contained material from The Hewkin Collection held particular appeal encompassing the whole of the parish without exception. The vote of thanks was given by the Treasurer, Godfrey Adams.

The Lecture Programme continues with -

Thursday 20th February, 1992
The Museum - 7.30 p.m.

The Manorial History of
Chadderton.
Mike Lawson and Mark Johnson.

Wednesday 18th March, 1992
The Museum - 7.30 p.m.

Bishop Fraser of Manchester.
People's Bishop & Social Reformer.
Dr. Edwina Davies.

Tuesday 14th April, 1992
The Museum - 7.30 p.m.

Oldham Tokens & Commemorative Medals.
Bill Kennett.

Further events in the 'Music at the Gallery' series.

Saturday 15th February, 1992.
8.30 p.m.

The Savannah Jazz Band

Saturday 21st March, 1992
8.30 p.m.

The Chicago Teddy Bears Society
Jazz Band.

Saturday 18th April, 1992
8.30 p.m.

Brian Carrick's Heritage Hall
Stompers.

Other Events at the Museum.

Now running until 1st March, 1992

An Exhibition of Childrens Art.

Saturday 25th January until
10th May, 1992

Hatches, Matches & Despatches.
A Look at Life in late
Victorian Times.

Wednesday 4th March, 1992	Coffee Morning & Sale of Bric-a-brac.
Friday 20th March, 1992	A Wine Tasting.
Saturday 4th April, 1992	Ukrainian Egg Painting.
Saturday 25th April, 1992	A Display & Demonstration of Embroidery.
Thursday 7th May, 1992	An Auction Sale.
Saturday & Sunday 16th and 17th May, 1992	Model Railway Exhibition.
Saturday 23rd May until 19th July, 1992	The Right Tool for the Job.

Archaeology Group.

The next meeting is on the 4th March, 1992, at the Cross Keys Inn, Uppermill, 7.45 p.m., when Mr. Antony T. Hodge will speak on his recent travels to Jordon and Petra, and then on the 1st April, 1992 a meeting to plan for the Summer and Weekend Visits will be conducted by the members of the Group.

The Summer Trip.

It has been decided that the Society's Summer Outing will be to North Wales & Anglesey, on Saturday the 11th July, 1992. Full details will be found in the Spring Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP SECTION.

Since the last Bulletin was published a total of ten new members have joined the Historical Society and we are pleased to welcome them into our midst and list their names below.

Mrs. S.F. Ratcliff, Greenfield.	Mr. Gordon Cannell, Clacton-on-Sea.
Mrs. Edith Bentley, Huddersfield.	Mr. Alan Rhodes, Diggle.
Mr. & Mrs. J. Meadowcroft of Bristol	& Mrs. Charlotte Meadowcroft, Aylesbury.
Mr. A.E.G. Wright, London.	Mrs. K.M. Thompson, Scouthead.
Mr. N.E. Peart, Grotton.	

We were pleased to arrange during October a visit by one of our new members, Mrs. Charlotte Meadowcroft and her family who returned to recall happy memories of Hey Top, Greenfield, where she lived 77 years ago. The visitors were welcomed by our Secretary, Mr. Neil Barrow and entertained at the home of Mrs. Eunice Bingley at Hey Top, where her family have lived for four generations. A wonderful day was spent re-capturing these happy moments and a visit was also paid to Greenfield Mill where Charlotte's father had worked during her years at Greenfield pre 1914. The party of eight from Bristol and Aylesbury have since lodged their full family tree and a photograph of Charlotte's father and mother Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Wagstaff in the Archive.

Since we reported Mr. & Mrs. H.E. Meadowcroft of Loughborough, joining the Society they have filed a very complete family tree showing their connections with the Tweedale Family in and around Strines into the 16th century. Another connection is the Mayall Family and anyone wishing to make contributions should contact Mrs. E. Broadbent, 872870 for full addresses. Incidentally, there is no connection with the

Mrs. Charlotte Meadowcroft mentioned previously, just another of life's coincidences.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. 1992

Once more at the Annual General Meeting subscriptions were increased in line with general inflation, and the various classes of payment are detailed below -

Family Membership	£8.50
Single Membership	£7.00
Retired per family	£5.25
Student Membership	£5.25

This year for the first time in an effort to establish a correct cash flow at the beginning of the year when subscriptions are due an invoice is to be issued with this Winter Bulletin to enable the Membership to make payment forthwith. The continued support of our loyal members is truly most appreciated and beneficial to the efforts of our Society.

Finally, the Newsletter Section could not let the retirement of Gordon Parry from the Committee pass without noting his long period of active service on the Society's behalf. Our Chairman, Jim Carr, has properly recorded his various duties in the Society, but in no small way his dedicated and stalwart activities have enabled the Society to progress from strength to strength and his will be an act difficult to follow. His dressing up for the part at the Costume Balls and indeed weaving the very cloth for his costume were an example of how to overcome to us all.

J. Hindle.