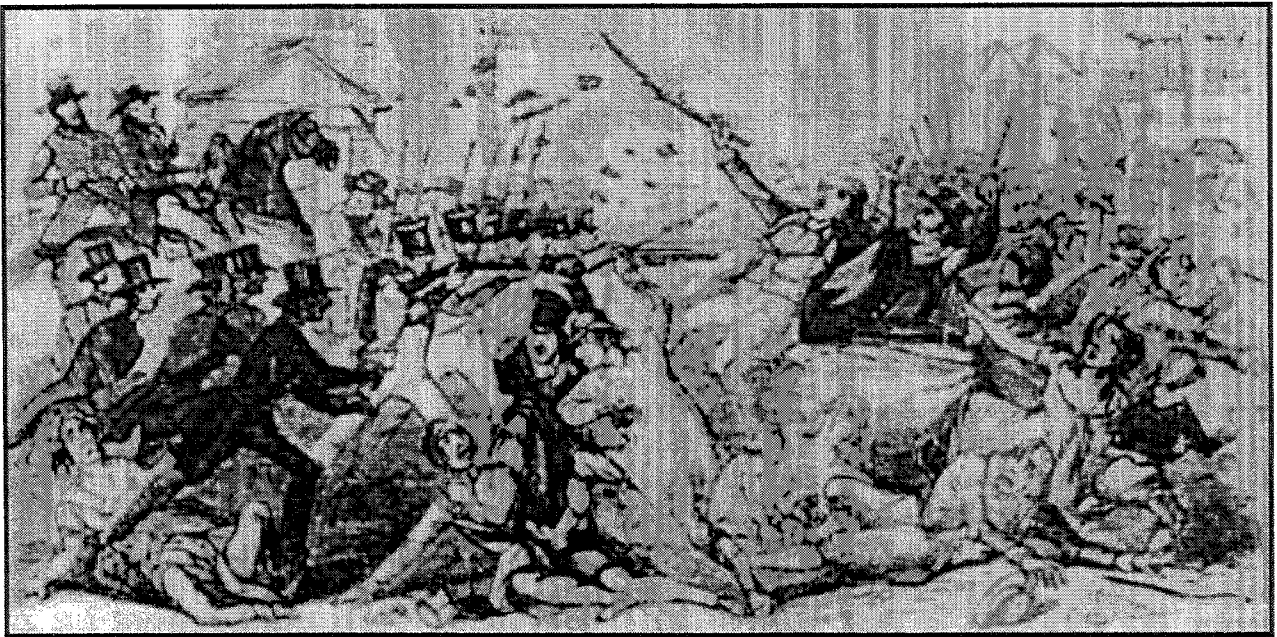


Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin



Volume 33

Number 3

Autumn 2003

Bulletin of the Saddleworth Historical Society

Volume 33

Number 3

Autumn 2003

Hannah Whitehead's Account of Chartist Riots in 1842 Howard Lambert	1
The Plug Riots and the Chartists: Some Comments on the Letter of Hannah Whitehead Nick Cox	4
Discovering Saddleworth with a Pen Geoff Toms	7
The Memoir of Wilfred Hill, Part II	14
Saddleworth Historical Society Newsletter	23

Cover illustration: 'A Plug Riot in Preston, August 1842'

© 2002 Saddleworth Historical Society and individual contributors

Saddleworth Historical Society

Registered Charity No. 505074

Chairman	Jim Carr	01457 87 3612
Vice-Chairman	Stanley Broadbent	0161 785 8268
Hon. Secretary	Neil Barrow	01457 876 381
Hon. Treasurer	Dorothy Latimer	0161 633 3205
Hon. Editor	Nick Cox <i>8 St Mary's Gate, Uppermill, Saddleworth OL3 6AT</i> <i>n.cox@lmu.ac.uk</i>	01457 875 557
Hon. Membership Secretary	Elsie Broadbent <i>Pastures Farm Flat, Back o'th' Low Road, Strinesdale, Saddleworth OL4 3SG</i>	0161 785 8268
Newsletter Editor	Jack Hindle <i>Kirkdale, Rumbles Lane, Delph, Saddleworth OL3 5EL</i>	01457 874 200
Publications Officer	Graham Griffiths	01457 870 159
Family History Group	Jean Sanders	01457 873 157
Internet Site Manager	Mike Buckley <i>mikebuckley@saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk</i>	01457 820 015
Hon. Archivist	Neil Barrow	01457 876381

The Bulletin aims to reflect and encourage interest in all aspects of the history of Saddleworth. It relies on a regular supply of articles, letters, short reviews, etc. from members and others. Fresh material is required constantly, and should be sent to the Editor, who will be happy to discuss ideas for articles (or shorter contributions) from anyone considering preparing one. Articles need not be confined to subjects within Saddleworth's borders, but should have some connection with the district.

The Society's Web site is at:

<http://www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk>

This has full details of the Society's activities, publications, library and archives, and there is an e-mail facility. An index to Saddleworth place names, a reference map of Saddleworth, and a bibliography of Saddleworth publications are included, together with the Newsletter and the current issue of the Bulletin. There are links to other Saddleworth Web sites.

Hannah Whitehead's Account of Chartist Riots in 1842

Howard Lambert

Hannah Whitehead was baptised at Delph Independent Chapel in 1827, the sixth child of William Whitehead and his wife Mary, nee Platt. The family had farmed for three generations at New Tame, Oldfield, and Greenleach where Hannah was born. In 1842 she was boarding at an Academy for Young Ladies in Bradford, perhaps with a view to eventually seeking a position as a Governess. 1842 was a tumultuous year. In London a would-be assassin pointed a gun at Queen Victoria and Prince Albert as they drove their carriage in the park. In the Midlands and the North, industrial strikes were so widespread that many people feared the country was teetering on the brink of revolution. The Chartist movement, formed from working-class societies four years earlier, was gaining momentum and a petition with over three million signatures was presented to the Commons. 'The People's Charter' made six demands, including universal male suffrage, secret ballots and annual parliaments. Riots were becoming commonplace in Yorkshire and elsewhere.

In August of that year, Hannah wrote to her elder sister, Esther Whitehead of Mill Gate House, near Oldham; her letter gives a vivid account of events taking place in and around Bradford and her longing to return home.

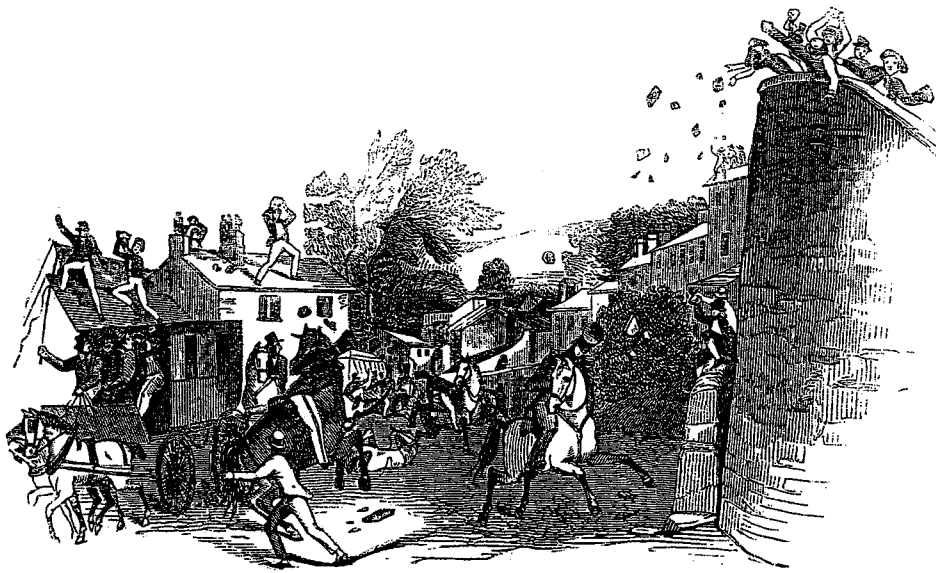
Bradford August 21st 1842

My Dear Sister,

I have felt very anxious this last week to know what has become of you or if the charters have molested you. There has been such a riot at Halifax and Huddersfield, Bradford and all about us. I suppose there was 6 kil'd and 15 severely wounded at Halifax. They say Bradford always comes off the best it has not suffered half so much as other towns. Bradford is going to be the headquarters for the soldiers 700 came in last week, and they are going to send a few to all the small villages round about. The Charters went to Mr Ackroyds Mill of Halifax and stoped it. Then they asked him for something to eat he gave them bread and meat as much as they wanted and 5L to go away quietly, so they did the Mill was set to work next morning but the Charters came again and worse than ever and smashed nearly all the windows but Bradford has

no need to fear we have Prince George's Soldiers hear 60 of the 17th Lancers besides the Yeomanry. Our waterman is a Charter his brother is one of the chief speakers we asked him where the Charters were now he said he thought they had got them all in York Castle they wont let them come into Leeds they have got the Queens Life Guards from London they are locked up not to be seen so when the mob comes they will soon put an end to them. All the shops were shut up two days two days in both Bradford and Halifax last week. It will be a sad thing if the Colliers turn out and I suppose they have in Lancashire or a grate part of them but I do hope and trust they have not been to our house. I do feel so anxious to know what Father is doing and all of you and brother Thomas there is said [sad?] work at Rochdale I heard. I suppose sister Eliza is at Manchester will you send me Thomas'es directions for I think it is time I wrote to him and Eliza's as well. Do write soon pleas for I am quite impatient to hear from you say how you all are particularly is Aunt Hannah any better. R. Walker has been very ill but is now got better. Do write tell Sister Eliza to write soon if she pleases. I should like to be at Home a month or two for I often fancy I can see the house. I should like to see you all again. I do wish these next three years was over do write and tell me all the news you have excuse this scribble for I cant get a good pen. I have nothing more to tell you at present so good by with dear love to all not forgetting one where I am your affectionate Sister

Hannah Whitehead



A riot at Salter Hebble, Halifax in 1842. Troops were called in to suppress the Chartists

All spelling is as per the transcribed letter in the Higson Collection.

References

1. Higson Manuscripts H47. Letter reproduced with kind permission of Oldham Local Studies Library.
2. Sketch of Halifax riot from the *Illustrated London News*, 3 September 1842.

The Plug Riots and the Chartists: Some Comments on the Letter of Hannah Whitehead

Nick Cox

Howard Lambert's discovery of the extremely interesting letter reproduced above provides a valuable insight into working class unrest in the West Riding and Lancashire in the 1840s and middle class reactions to it. It struck me that the letter may well allude to the so-called Plug riots in August 1842. The Plug Riots were a response to the depression in the textile industry in the northern manufacturing districts and the wage cuts and unemployment brought in its wake. In early August 1842 mill workers came out on strike against further wage cuts and 'mobs' began marching from mill to mill, demanding they stop work. If the owners refused to do so the strikers pulled the drain plugs of recently installed boilers in the mills and thus prevented them from working. This movement of industrial protest was primarily a response on the part of textile workers to economic distress. However it acquired a 'political' dimension, in part, because it was taken up and supported by the Chartist movement in the Pennine communities. It was this combination of economic grievances and political agitation which gave rise to the anxieties about insurrection and revolutionary turmoil which Howard Lambert describes and which is so vividly illustrated by Hannah Whitehead's letter.

In recent work on the events of 1842 the Hebden Bridge WEA local history group have traced the trajectory of the riots which, they suggest, reached crisis point in the Calder Valley in mid August. On 12th August a mob, estimated to be between 15,000 and 20,000 strong, marched on Todmorden, brought the mills to a standstill and reportedly threatened that if any resumed work they would burn or destroy all the mills in the district. The following day 'another large crowd assembled at Todmorden... and moved down the valley, closing the mills as far as Hebden Bridge' (Jennings, 1992, p.154). On Monday 15th a mass meeting was called on Skircoat Moor which was addressed by the local Chartist leader Benjamin Rushton of Ovenden, who urged his audience to support the strike but to avoid violence (ibid). The crowd then moved up the Calder Valley, stopping the mills as they went. As they approached Halifax the Todmorden contingent were joined by others from Hebden Bridge and Bradford. In Halifax the crowd were finally dispersed by the intervention of the cavalry stationed in the town (Jennings, 1992, 155).

The Hebden Bridge WEA group suggest that Ackroyd's Mills at Haley dam were the site of the most significant disturbances at Halifax on 15th August. Here eighteen men were arrested for having 'pulled the plugs' of the mill and for attempting to breach the mill dam (ibid). Hannah Whitehead's letter provides further insight into the actions of the rioters towards Ackroyd's mill. The letter suggests a relatively sustained campaign against Ackroyd, including the 'stopping' of the mill but also the collection of food and money, a customary element in many forms of popular protest, and finally the acts of retribution towards the mill when it was set working once more.

Although the letter is clearly reporting events second hand and may be a reworking of fevered local reports and gossip, it is perhaps not unlikely that Ackroyd's mill was a peculiarly significant target for the protestors. The Ackroyds had been at the forefront of opposition amongst Halifax manufacturers to Chartist campaigns in the 1830s to limit the working day to ten hours and had championed the new poor law, another object of Radical discontent. They were also 'prominent figures' in the Anti-Corn Law League campaign in the town (Jennings, 1992, pp152-153). The extended campaign against his mill suggested by the letter may indicate that Ackroyd, as a leading local manufacturer and also an important figure in the campaign against Chartist objectives, had become an object of particular opprobrium.

The reference in the letter to '6 kil'd and 15 severely wounded at Halifax' may be an exaggerated account of the aftermath of the riot at Saterhebble Hill on 16th August, when the cavalry detailed to guard the district were ambushed and five horsemen unseated in a volley of stones. This incident is illustrated in the sketch from the *Illustrated London News* at the end of Howard Lambert's article. In their efforts to put the riot down the remaining cavalry fired on the crowd and used their swords to scatter the rioters. Home Office papers record eight wounded rioters and over thirty arrests. (Jennings, 1992, p.155). Again, Hannah Whitehead's letter may seem an 'unreliable' source in its seemingly erroneous and exaggerated version of this incident. However it is valuable because it gives us a glimpse into the *mentalité* of the propertied classes in the midst of this moment of crisis. In its use of the term 'Charters' to describe all participants in the Plug Riots, the letter provides some evidence of the alignment, in the minds of some of the middle classes in the manufacturing districts, of industrial protest and Chartist agitation. Although, from our standpoint, such an alignment is really a simplification of a more complex picture there is here an acknowledgement of the potentially dangerous politicization of weaving communities. Hannah Whitehead's rather anxious cataloguing of the various forces marshalled against the 'Charters' and her rather tremulous insistence that 'they wont let them come into Leeds' is

suggestive of the nervousness with which many close to the manufacturing interests in the West Riding viewed these events.

Lastly, it would be interesting to be able to answer Hannah's anxious enquiry of her sister in the opening sentence of the letter: whether 'the charters have molested you'. Perhaps further research into the Whiteheads and their connections with the Plug Riots and Chartism might be fruitful.

References

Jennings, Bernard (ed.) Hebden Bridge WEA Local History Group (1992) *Pennine Valley: A History of Upper Calderdale*. Otley: Smith Settle

Discovering Saddleworth With a Pen

Geoff Toms

[Geoff Toms was invited to produce the pen and ink sketches for the book Saddleworth Villages published in June this year. Readers of the book will no doubt agree that the illustrations provide an elegant accompaniment to the text. In the following article the artist describes some of the challenges, pleasures and insights his involvement in the project entailed and the particular associations with his own past some of his subjects had.]

After accepting the invitation to produce a quantity of pen and ink sketches for the book *Saddleworth Villages* some two years ago, I started to wonder what I'd let myself in for. Living sixty miles distant meant total reliance on good photography, no nipping out to check hidden detail. I felt, in a very humble way, I was joining the ranks of such artists with pen and ink skills as Frank Patterson, known for his impeccable early Twentieth Century village illustrations for the *Cyclists Touring Club*, and that great artist of Lakeland fame, A. Wainwright.

Such an exercise, recently completed, is, I feel, worthy of comment. Certainly worthy of note is the involvement of Neil Barrow [co-author with Mike Buckley, Alan Petford and Jean Sanders of the text of *Saddleworth Villages (Ed)*], whose efforts on my behalf have been substantial. He supplied the bulk of the photographic material used for the sketches. Together we coped with any difficulties and the fact that all flowed so smoothly, I consider a remarkable achievement. Of my fellow contributors I knew only voices on the 'phone, until the final month of the project.

As a creative person, I found it was essential to adjust artistic ideals for this project. Much of the material presented required a particular type of discipline, namely devotion to duty. Style and approach were dictated by the requirements of the subjects. For instance, ornate lettering demanded tight treatment to do justice to the stone carver's skill. Some of the subjects offered greater freedom of expression and more excitement.

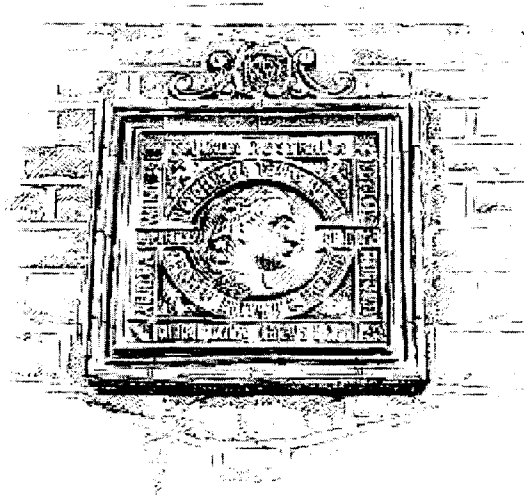
Although the project was not intended as a voyage of artistic discovery through Saddleworth, it offered occasional highlights and opportunities. Pen and ink is a rather unforgiving medium. Black is black and illustrations are easily ruined by overworking. It never came to that, although sometimes it was necessary to hold one's nerve when things became desperate. All one could

resort to was simple scratching out, I never used white paint. Although I feel some doubt about some of the illustrations, others still give pleasure. Artists are their own worst critics, although we occasionally get close, we never quite realise our ideals.



St John's Church, Roughtown

Some of the subjects in *Saddleworth Villages* I approached with an attitude of 'hold your breath and go for it', as with Roughtown Church. I spent quite a while looking at the stark pencil lines of the spire before gathering courage for two quick strokes of the pen. No second chance. A bonus with this picture, for me, were the hints of the Pennines I was able to suggest. Other subjects could tax one's patience. The Royal George bronze was an early challenge. Having no great affection for Queen Victoria, or the Colonial philosophy of the period, I found this drawing particularly demanding, both in terms of the time required to successfully complete it and the concentration it required.



Often I would wish that the camera had been pointed just a little more to the left or right of the subject. This was the case with the 'King Billy'. I was aware that Indian's Head and Wimberry Rocks were in sight, out of the frame and looking down Chew Valley Road, but this was not a book about the magnificent hill shapes that adorn the district.

I also found myself continually removing cars from photographs and then having to answer the inevitable question: what was behind them? In a number of cases additional photographs were needed, with trees and hedges being trimmed to reveal the details they hid, although trees could often be a salvation and reduce work. There are times when an artist becomes a crafty manipulator and the arrival of photographs was the cause of some excitement for me, selecting the images for inspiration was reminiscent of the experience of choosing (luckily or not) from the bran-tub.

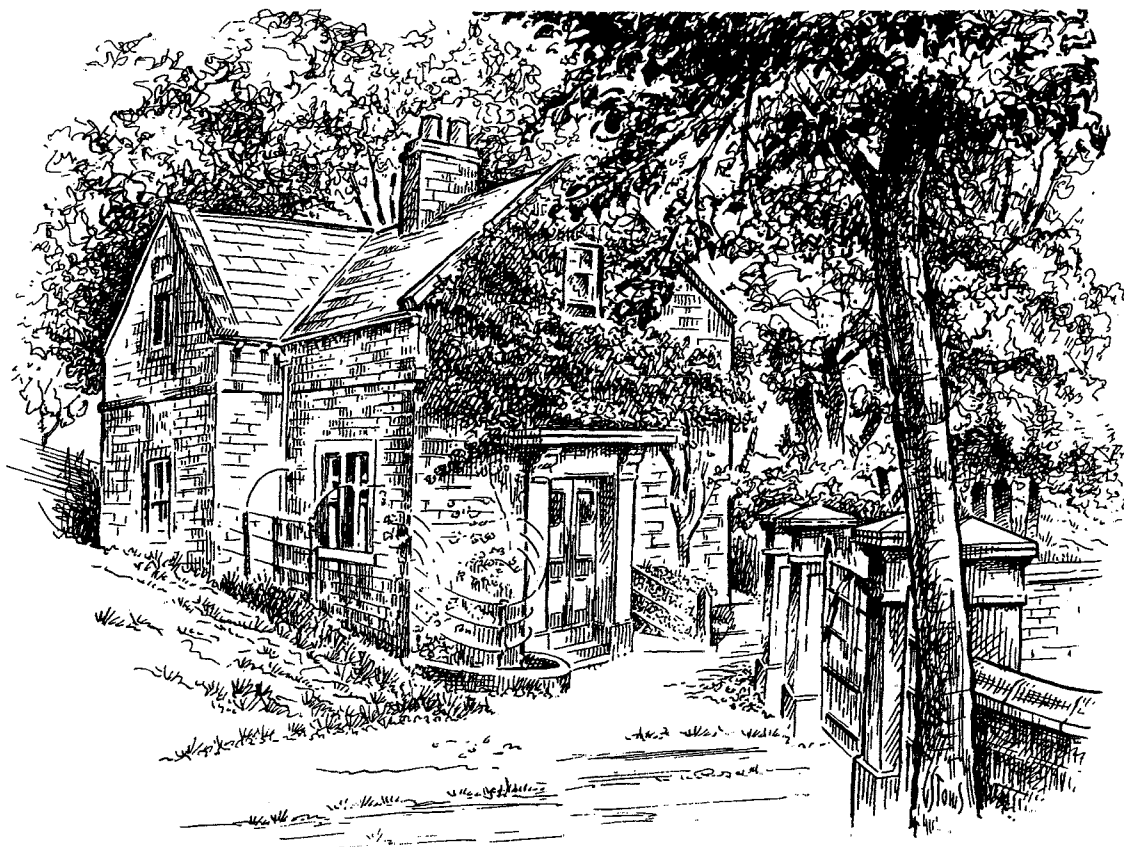


King William IV Public House

Photographs which contained an air of mystery called for a particular style, intended to capture the atmosphere. Others, with a successful composition and wide tonal range, such as those of Scouthead Church or the Viaduct over the canal, however, made picture-making a pleasure. There was an occasional unexpected funny side to some illustrations, which is perhaps best kept within my tight circle of friends, who have had a laugh.

On a more serious note were the delights of Dobcross village, which, to my shame I had never previously visited. So I put the record straight after completing the required set of drawings of the village. It was raining, but I was in no way disappointed, Dobcross offers a view equal to that of any calendar of the Cotswolds and provides a challenge to many better-known English beauty spots. Thence to The Swan (I blame Neil for that) overjoyed to find ales from Cockermouth and

also a first-rate meal, after which I just had to stand again in the rain to relish the view. Dobcross will see me again.



The Lodge, Mossley Road

As the project progressed, deadlines loomed and Grasscroft became the last village to be covered. This was my stamping ground when I was young, so work on this part of the book was particularly satisfying for me. Neil suggested I illustrate the house which had been my mother's home from 1903-1929: Grasscroft Lodge. I was able to make use of an 1880's photograph, which did justice to its original appearance. At the time it seemed the completion of this sketch would bring my involvement in the project to a fitting conclusion. However, extra requests arrived for Uppermill and Friezland Church, which required much more thought. I then realised that this church holds more memories, for me, than any other scene illustrated in the book, its associations far more personal than those of The Lodge. Needing additional photographic help, with Neil away, I phoned a long-standing ally – Peter Fox. It worked!



Christ Church, Friezland

In the early 1940s, I'd sit on the wall by the cinder path opposite McCardell's Soap Works. Canon Smith regularly passed by me, returning to the Vicarage and always had a few friendly words as I collected engine numbers. He knew our family as visitors: Dad would go to Sunday worship, mother had been a member and was married there in 1929. My aunt was in the choir, I'd watch her walk along the cinder path on a Sunday evening as the bells were swinging their songs into the hills. In my teens, I wheedled my way beneath that spire to enjoy a couple of hours on the organ. The spire could not be ignored for it is a pointer to all Saddleworth has meant. Always in view, I've looked at it countless times as it cut into Pots and Pans, whilst the hills began to recede into approaching dark and the first points of light would take their regular places on the slopes of Alphin and Noon Sun: the many hamlets around Greenfield. The churchyard

was hinted at in an escapist poem of the early 1950s and there is the final resting place of my Grandfather, a man I never met but was lead to believe was something of a 'tough old clog'. His headstone still stands. Also, in a quiet corner, those three invaluable members of the Hutchinson family, friends without whom I'd never have known Saddleworth, they were true traditional Saddleworthians. For these reasons this illustration was surely the most fitting close to my part in the book.

Nostalgic? I am not ashamed to admit I am. Nostalgia is as good a reason as any to be a member of Saddleworth Historical Society and doubtless why I agreed to become involved in the *Saddleworth Villages* book. It's about an area meaning more to me than anywhere else on earth.

One shouldn't tempt fate. Like many a good romance, it wasn't to be. A photograph of Denshaw Church fell through the letter box with only days to go, so Friezland Church didn't, after all, become the ideal full stop.

As for Denshaw, I remember asking, after noting the name on the blind of a North Western bus, 'Where's Denshaw?' The reply 'Nobbut a hamlet t'other side Delph. Nowt theer.' As for hamlets, could that be the title for another Saddleworth Historical Society publication: *Saddleworth Hamlets*. Then we'd all know where they are, or were. It wasn't only Elgar who created Enigmas, the area is endowed with them, this is part of its fascination. Through my involvement in the *Saddleworth Villages* book, I've been greatly impressed by many of Saddleworth's overlooked gems and come to realise how little I know of its heritage. So, after some 600 hours I've put my pens away. It has been a most interesting project to be involved with, but I wouldn't want to tackle it all again.

Saddleworth Villages is available for purchase using the order form enclosed.

The Memoir of Wilfred Hill, Part Two

[This is the second extract of Wilfred Hill's Memoir to be published in the Bulletin (for part one see SHSB 33 (2), pp.1-5). This section provides an account of the period between the wars when Wilfred Hill's father, George Hill, established and built up a thriving timber merchant's business. The account provides interesting insights into the building industry in Oldham in the inter-war period and Wilfred's experiences up until the outbreak of hostilities. The editor is grateful to Mr Graham Hill for making the manuscript of the memoir available for publication.]

When the war came to an end in November 1918, Bamforth's, where my father worked, experienced a quiet period. This was understandable as they had chiefly been doing war work up to it ending. It so happened that the motor trade was starting to develop and the Paragon Motor Co. were building their new showrooms on King Street. Bamforth's place was immediately behind on Cavendish Street and they approached Mr Bamforth with a very good offer to buy his place, for use as their repair department. He asked my father what he should do and my father said: 'I should sell'. Mr Bamforth was about retiring age at the time and although he would have carried on with the business if my father had wished, the capital was very useful to him at that age, so the business was sold to Frank Lord, later Sir Frank, who was one of the whiz kids of that age. Although he must have been only about 18 at the time, he had his own building firm in Wallshaw Street. There was no agreement, but it was thought that father would have gone with the business. He went down to Wallshaw Street to look at Frank Lord's set-up and found that the machinery would not be inside but under a shed. This had been the case at Bamforth's but, whilst father was prepared to work for Mr Bamforth, who was a friend, he was not going to do it for a young person like Frank Lord. It was at this time that he decided to start up on his own account.

My father's brother, Uncle Roland, was discharged from the Army soon after the war ended and being out of a job came to work for us. He had been a book-keeper and clerk, employed by the Railway before the war, so after a period, when he helped wherever necessary, he became the firm's secretary until he retired at 65.

There was, at that time, a row of cottages in Water Street and Bates Street that were derelict. They had been used for various purposes, including kipper curing. They belonged to Taylor and

Lees Brewery and were for sale and, being near the centre of town, father thought they would be a suitable place to start. This would be about the spring of 1919. He got a mortgage on them and then started to convert them. The roof was stripped off and replaced with Belfast roof covered with felt. All the inside walls were removed and tie-rods were put in to prevent the outside walls from bulging. He bought a second hand four cutter from a place in Manchester, a set of emery wheels and a new Push Circular Saw bench from Leeds. These three machines were driven by a counter shaft that had to be below ground, because the vibration would have been too much for the wall. He also had to sink a well to keep the trench where the counter shaft was, clear of water. This well had to be emptied periodically by buckets, we later got a hand pump. The counter shaft was driven by a twenty five horse-power D.C. motor, that was bought new from Frank Wall's on hire purchase. The wheels started to turn on the 11th of November 1918, the first anniversary of the signing of the Armistice in 1918. We had a lot of trouble with the four cutter as the bearings were of the plain conical type, which required a lot of attention. They had to be perfect to run at the high speeds required for wood-working. Fortunately, after about two years, we were able to have it converted to ball bearings. This was a tremendous step for us in those days, saving a lot of time.

The majority of Bamforth's customers came to George Hill as soon as he was able to supply them, as the other timber people in the town were also joiners, which meant that the people who went to them for supplies were also competing with them. There was a piece of vacant land opposite our place in Water Street, belonging to Wild and Co., billposters, and in 1921 we bought it and built a rear-up shed and a lay-down shed for storing our stock. We incorporated the office and about ten square feet. We hadn't had an office before, apart from making delivery notes out, the book keeping had to be done at home. Uncle Roland, who came to be secretary, was partly employed serving customers outside and partly in the office, which was mainly after tea. He didn't start work until 9.30 but he worked until about 7.30 in the evening. My sister Elsie started to work in the office in about 1922 or 3. She had originally been a confectioner at Moorside. It was, however, my father who was the firm in every way. He was there all the time when the place was open, 8 am to 8 pm Monday to Friday and 4 or 5 pm on Saturdays.

I remember one Saturday afternoon in the early '20s. It was, I think, in 1920. The emery wheels for grinding the cutters were driven by a pulley on the end of the counter shaft and my father used to put the belt on without stopping the motor. The pulley on the counter shaft was secured by a sett screw which protruded, all this should have been covered up but it wasn't, and in putting the

belt on my father must have stepped too close to the pulley and the sett screw caught the bottom of one leg of his trousers, stripping it off like a knife, to above the knee. It could have been very serious, but it was done like a flash of lightening. We both had to laugh. There were only the two of us there so he had to hide himself while I dashed off home for another pair of trousers.

Two events that I have not mentioned, whilst we were living at 139 Balfour Street, are the death of my Grandfather and sister. Grandfather died in 1918, he had been living with us, bedfast for some time and crippled with rheumatism. My sister, Florence Ina Hill, was born at Marshead, Diggle and she died after an illness that lasted for several weeks. She was a lovely child, a bundle of energy and the family favourite. The trouble started after she had eaten some chips, followed by a green apple. This was on a Saturday night and on Sunday she became very ill, vomiting and in great pain. The doctor didn't quite know what was wrong and came daily for quite some time. The weeks went by and she became thinner and thinner. She couldn't keep anything down. Father and Mother tried everything. They would have spent their last penny to get her well again, but it hadn't to be. Father was a quiet man, not given to outbursts, but when she died, which was during the night, he was up early the following morning and I can remember him crying out: 'My poor little darling's dead'. My sister's illness had taken a lot out of my mother and after the funeral, father sent her, along with my brother Frank, to her brother Herbert and Aunt Polly, who lived on Waine Island, Barrow in Furness. These happenings took place at the time the Water Street premises were being got ready and I am sure that it must have helped my father to keep his mind off the tragedy.

In 1923 my brother Frank began working [in the firm] as an apprentice Woodworking Machinist like myself. When we first went to Water Street, the land opposite was a Coal Yard belonging to Chamber Colliery, but shortly afterwards, it was cleared of coal and the sleeper fence removed and then was sold to Oldham Industrial Co-op Society. They bought it with the intention of building a bakery on it but, before the plans were completed, some other premises came up for sale in Viscount Street, off Rochdale Road, belonging to Rothwells, who had been producing motor cars. This was before cars were mass-produced. The Co-op bought the building, which became the Bakery and Joiner's Shop for a good number of years. This meant that the land in Water Street was not required for immediate use, so father got a lease on it for seven years. We fenced it in and built two big sheds on it and had part as an open yard. The business was expanding with supplies to house-builders in the post-war period. The Building Trade has always been top of the league for bankruptcies and father had his troubles, one being a debt of £700 by a

firm called Suthers, Wilson and Randal of Butler Green, Chadderton. I don't remember how much in the pound was paid, but it wasn't a lot. George Hill was a man who was loath to think badly of anyone, but he did think Levi Suthers had been dragged down by his partners. Suthers did start out again on his own account, as he previously was a builder, and he continued to business with us.

In 1928 father bought a piece of land at the bottom of Whitegate Lane, Chadderton, and built a terrace of houses on it. The work was done by Levi Suthers. The houses were not sold very quickly. There wasn't much money around at the time and I can well remember the jubilation when the first one was sold for £440. The other three were sold shortly after. This was the beginning of father's interest in building houses. The next venture in this line was at Heyside in 1929. A Glass and China merchant had built three houses and a warehouse in and behind Brownlow Avenue. The topmost house had been completed in 1915, but the other three houses were only completed up to and including being roofed in. The windows were in but the doors were bricked up. The houses had been left unfinished because of the war. They had been used as warehouses for the business in the meantime. Unfortunately, Mr Andrews, the owner, had an accident and was killed about 1928 and his widow put the whole of the property and the land up for sale. Father got to know of this and bought the three unfinished houses and the warehouse. He wasn't particularly interested in the house that was occupied, although he made a bid for it. Levi Suthers was due to retire about this time, so father engaged Fred Bainbridge, his foreman, who was a joiner, to supervise the completion of the three unfinished houses. It was an opportunity for my brother Frank to gain some experience of joinery, which is essential to a woodworking machinist. It was also an advantage to have one of our family there to keep and eye on the progress. Two of the three houses were sold before completion to Mr and Mrs Herbert Wild and Mr and Mrs Sidney Baron. The third house was not sold, but let to the Curate of St Mark's Church and, when he left, to Mr and Mrs Meredith.

In 1930, my father decided to build on the remaining land fronting Brownlow Avenue. Plans had been drawn up some years before by Mr Andrews for a terrace of four, two bedroom houses joining on to the previous three. The job was given to a firm called Whittaker Bros of Hollinwood, who were good customers of ours. Marian and myself were married on February 18th 1931 and we bought the end one. This is how Marian and myself came to spend the first 24 years of our married life at No.1, Brownlow Avenue.

About this time, the lease for the yard on Water Street had run out and we were on 12 months notice to quit. The Industrial Co-op Society had decided to develop it for a garage for their vehicles. The Oldham Ice Company had recently moved from their premises in Lady Street to Falcon Street, Ashton Road and had put the Lady Street building up for sale. It was the only vacant place fairly near to Water Street, so my father bought it for £550. It wasn't ideally suitable although it was an improvement on Water Street for manufacturing purposes. It had a cellar, which was handy for the chippings and sawdust. We adapted the building to our requirements as far as it was possible, but it was hopeless for modern working, nevertheless, we were there, with the addition of the yard we had on Lord Street, for nearly 30 years. This included the war years from 1939 to 1945. Fred Bainbridge did the alteration and extension at Lady Street after he had completed the job at Heyside.

Up to 1932, our deliveries had been made by various forms of transport: Hand Cart and Horse Cart, Horse and Lorry, motor Lorry. The trouble was they had not started making lorries of a medium capacity with a body length sufficient for carrying timber. It had to be carried over the top of the cab, which is unsatisfactory for general use, but in 1932 Vauxhalls started making the Bedford trucks of 3 ton capacity with a 12' body. My father decided that this would be suitable for our purposes. Our progress towards self-sufficiency in transport may seem slow in modern terms, but money in 1932 was not as plentiful as today and my father wouldn't dream of buying a second-hand vehicle. He had experienced that with horse and carts on the farm. He used to say if you wanted to do somebody a bad turn, give him an old horse and cart. They would always be in debt. Albert Mason worked for Wrigley's Haulage Contractors of Hollins Road, they were the people who collected most of our timber from the docks and, when we got our own Bedford truck, he applied for the job of driving. He was with us until the end of 1939.

Father bought his first car in 1935, a Ford ten, the price £135, from Oldham Motor Co. We have had a few cars and trucks from them since then. We moved the woodworking machines from Water Street to Lady Street in 1932. The Sales and Administration was carried out at Water Street. About 1936, my father thought it would be a good idea to get a lightweight vehicle to deliver small orders up to 5 or 6 cwts. He bought an Austin chassis from Lookers of Manchester. You couldn't have anything lighter than this. We had a cab and a small body about four foot square with a tail board and a Babby behind the cab. His [George Hill's] name was on the tail-board and on the a board over the cab was written 'Light Deliveries'. It was very useful but

always overloaded. We had it for about two years and we then replaced it with a Commer truck carrying about thirty cwt.

In 1935, at the time of the Munich crisis, local authorities were instructed to buy as much constructional timber as they could find room for. This was in case there was a war, to use for shoring up buildings, air raid shelters and anything connected with the war. The requirements were spread out amongst the suppliers in the town. We were probably turning over more timber at that time than any of the others, as we were able to supply a fair amount from our existing stocks, but we, like the other people in the trade, bought large quantities to replace them. After a week or so after Chamberlain had been to see Hitler, the crisis passed and the Corporation asked the people who they had placed orders with if they could cancel them and we were the only firm in the town who agreed to this. The reason for this was that our purchases would be replacing the timber we had already supplied and father thought that to increase our stock at this time would not be a bad thing, as in his opinion, the respite might be only temporary and he was proved right. Consequently, when the war did break out in 1939, our stock was higher than it had ever been.

We had agreed with the Fire Brigade, some months before the war started, to loan them our Commer truck to pull an auxiliary fire tender in the event of an emergency. We had not realised that if war started it would be stood at the Fire Station doing nothing, so it came as a shock when it was commandeered right at the beginning.

For the first few months of the war we were very busy, for a week or two we worked Saturday and Sunday delivering stuff. Father asked me to try and find another truck. After ringing up all the garages that we knew, we eventually found an old Commer 5 ton truck at the same garage in Rochdale where we purchased our other Commer. It came in handy whilst the rush was on but after a few weeks, we did not need it, so it was sold for about the same price we paid for it. We still had a five-ton Bedford which replaced our original one. This was purchased in 1937. We used it during the war for bringing in plywood, which we were storing, and carting timber for importers we were friendly with. After the big rush when war started, business went very quiet. All house building had stopped, timber was not yet on license, but the demand had gone for any great quantity, so we were faced with the task of either stopping men or putting them on short time. The problem more or less solved itself, some joined the Army, one the Auxiliary Fire Service and some got fresh jobs. After Germany had conquered Poland there was a period that was called the Phoney War. The Germans had decided that the winter was not the best time to

start their attack in the West and apart from spasmodic air raids, very little movement was made by them. We decided that it was not necessary to keep open both Water Street and Lady Street premises, so we emptied everything from Water Street and closed it down. There was only George Hill, Uncle Roland, myself, my brother Frank, sister Elsie's husband Herbert Higgs, a couple of labourers and two apprentices.

Early in 1940, most of our stock had been disposed of, so we applied to the Timber Control in Liverpool for a quota of timber and plywood. Timber merchants were allowed an allocation at a price fixed by the government. In addition, we were allowed to purchase further quantities on what was known as Merchant to Merchant terms. Joiners, property repairers and anyone requiring timber had to apply to for a license, stating the quantities and what it was required for. When the license was granted the holder took it along to their supplier to obtain the materials. In the case of a joiner or property repairer, licenses were granted to cover a period for day to day requirements in addition to licenses for a large amount for a specific job, which could be of national importance. When we received the licenses from customers, we supplied the timber, endorsed them and returned them to the customer, who then sent them back to the government department who had issued the license. Where the license was to cover a period it was retained by us until the full amount had been taken up, this may have covered a period of up to three months. There are always a lot of one man businesses in the building trade and some of them who may have been very good at their job, hated the clerical side. They didn't like applying for licenses and when they got one, thought it should last forever. The result was that whilst we did not supply timber to anyone who had not got a license for it, there were bound to be arguments between us. There were times when we had to insist that we could not supply any further materials until the customer got another license. We had to draw the line somewhere.

We could occasionally buy parcels of timber that were not subject to license, like dunnage [*loose wood laid in the bottom of a ship's hold to keep a cargo out of the bilge water (Ed.)*], and large crates that could yield usable timber. There were other things that did not require a license, chief of these was wooden gutters. The license had to be obtained by ourselves to manufacture them. There are still miles of wooden gutters in the Lancashire area. Terraced houses that were built between about 1880 and 1930 had wooden gutters. This was the period between lead lined stone gutters, cast iron gutters and the steel, aluminium, asbestos and plastic introduced after the First World War.

In 1940, everybody of military age had to register, giving their age, occupation and choice of service, if any. I put down for the Air Force and in due course had to attend a medical at Dover Street in Manchester. I failed to pass and was ordered to see another doctor a month later. This was a Dr Thompson in St John Street, Manchester. A few weeks after, I received my grade card and it came as a shock to find that I was Grade 4, which meant that I was unfit for military service.

In 1940, I joined the Home Guard, it was at first called the L. D. V., Local Defence Volunteers. We were No.2 Platoon, Royton. As our headquarters and for training, we had a classroom and the school-yard at Blackshaw Lane school for square bashing. We were made up of men who had served in the First World War, those who were in reserved occupations, some like myself and younger men waiting to be called up. We were taught quite a number of interesting things, like map reading, rifle use, firing practice with both .22, for which we had our own range, and for 303 we used to go to the ranges at Facit and Holcombe. We enjoyed the exercises, some lasting through the night. Our worst experience in the area was in August 1940, when the Belgain Mill at the bottom of Blackshaw Lane was bombed. It was apparently mistaken for the Woodstock Mill at Higginshaw, which was then being used for the manufacture of carburettors.

We had some very hard winters during the war, with heavy falls of snow and I remember one occasion, going to Liverpool for a load of plywood and only seeing one other vehicle on the East Lancashire Road. The snow had not been moved on most of it and was hard packed, which meant a very rough ride. I did not go again until it had thawed. In war-time, roads were not attended to as quickly as they are today. I remember one occasion when I was collecting plywood from Liverpool after a heavy bombing raid on the docks, I went to the warehouse and then to the office, which was a short distance away. I was told I couldn't load up as there was an unexploded bomb opposite and to move my wagon right away.

Just before the war, we bought the Anchor Chain Building on Lord Street. It had been empty for about twelve months, after they had moved to Rochdale Road. We had new windows put in and the brickwork pointed. It was a three-storey building so we had a 10 cwt, crane installed. We used the two upper floors for items that were not turned over very quickly. During the war it was wholly used for storing plywood and insulation board. We also had a crane installed in the Lady Street building, also to store plywood.

In 1942, Grandma Hill died, after suffering for years with Bronchitis. Her heart finally gave up. My father and the rest of the family were very fortunate that a cousin of my mother, Emma Boothroyd, had been staying with them to look after my mother for some time. She was older than my father and mother but she was very fit, out-living them both. In 1946, my father had a very serious heart attack and at that time medical knowledge was not as advanced as it is today, consequently, he was in bed for about six months, attended by Dr Brown and lovingly nursed and looked after by Emma. She thought the world of him. He was 68 when he was taken ill and it was about 12 months before he became fit again. My brother Frank and I, along with Uncle Roland, had been carrying on the business satisfactorily, during his illness, so that when he had fully recovered, he did not wish to come back in an official capacity, so after consulting Devnonald, our accountant for 30 years, he decided to form a Limited Company with a capital of £5000.

**SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2003**

.....

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun.

To Autumn. Keats.

The Society would like to congratulate Mr. Roger Tanner on a much deserved award of the M.B.E. for his outstanding services to the Arts in Saddleworth, which have achieved such a high standard of recognition throughout the North West of England and beyond.

SADDLEWORTH VILLAGES BOOK

The acclaimed Saddleworth Villages book is selling well and is now available at £13.95 to members of the Society. Orders for Christmas presents can be made with the enclosed booking slip which contains the price advantage towards Society members. The four authors will be giving talks around the villages during the forthcoming year to promote book sales and the first talk will be at the Swan Inn, Dobcross, 7.30 pm., Wednesday, 1st October, 03

A SADDLEWORTH VILLAGES BOOK DAY SCHOOL AT THE MUSEUM ON SATURDAY 25th OCTOBER, 03. Commencing at 11.00 am, will be presented by the authors of the book Neil Barrow, Michael Buckley, Alan Petford & Jean Sanders. These four authors are to conduct guided tours around the villages which are detailed in the book and give descriptive talks preceding their interesting walks. Please use the enclosed booking slip before the 18th October, 03, or ring any of the authors for further information, telephone numbers at the front of this bulletin. This event is free to members.

SOCIETY LECTURES

The initial lecture to be held at the Museum, commencing 7.30 pm., on the 8th October, 03, is entitled 'SADDLEWORTH MEN AT WAR', to be given by Mr. Ian McInnes his speciality is Military History and whose previous lectures have been very well received.

On the 19th ^{Nov} October, 7.30 pm at the Museum, Mr. Duncan Gurr the Oldham Historian and co-author with Julian Hunt of The Cotton Mills of Oldham, is engaged to lecture upon 'The Oldham Cotton Industry', of which he is an acknowledged authority. This chance to extend one's learning of Oldham's part in the industrial past of Lancashire should not be missed and is to be welcomed.

The ANNUAL BEER FESTIVAL has once again been held at the Museum and attracted a good following to sample our local beverages and enjoy the musical entertainment provided in the evenings of this Festival. Indeed old friends have returned to enjoy the ambience of these Saddleworth gatherings and renew acquaintances. This event is a major fund raiser for the Museum and the good attendances will have helped to swell the coffers of our volunteer treasurers.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT THE MUSEUM

Coffee Mornings, Boutique and Plant Sale.	2nd Wednesday of each month.
Farmers' Markets.	2nd Sunday of each month.
Sunday Lunch.	Sunday 19th October, 03
Donkey Derby.	Friday 21st November, 03
Travel Film Show.	In the New Year.
Choir Concert.	-do-
Coach Trip to Chester - January Sales.	-do-

ART EXHIBITIONS AT THE MUSEUM

South Square Artists.	20th September - 19th October, 03
Saddleworth Open Art Exhibition.	24th October - 30th November, 03
Helen Wild.	6th December - 4th January, 04
Oldham 6th Form College.	10th January 04 - 8th February, 04

CHANGING EXHIBITIONS

The Annie Kenney Exhibition runs until the 26th October, 03

The Canal Exhibition named Canal Mania opens on the 8th November, 03

CIVIC TRUST EVENTS.

.....
Friday 17th October, 03. 7.30 pm. Saddleworth Museum.
Members' Evening - Meet other Members and Committee.
And - 'Achievements so far'. A talk by Stephen Langtree - Chairman of the recently formed NW.ACTS. Vice President of the Chester Civic Trust.

Thursday 27th November, 03. 7.30 pm. Saddleworth Museum.
Annual General Meeting, followed by 'Urban & Rural Renaissance' a talk by Joan Blencowe of the Council for Preservation of Rural England.

Late December - Winter Trip - to be arranged, details later.

Joining the CIVIC TRUST is a positive action to learn more and take part in the preservation of our precious Saddleworth countryside. The aim of the Civic Trust is to care for our fields, roads, footpaths and our unique Pennine gritstone buildings of the interesting village landscape. Everyone is welcome to assist in this important Conservation work and to join the Trust please contact :-

The Hon. Secretary, Lorna Gartside, Hollingreave Farm, Holly Grove, Dobcross,
Saddleworth. OL3 5JW. Tel. No. 01457 873195

£5.00 Single Membership. per year.

£7.00 Family Membership. per year.

MEMBERSHIP SECTION.

.....

A welcome is extended to new members who have joined the Society since the last Bulletin was published.

Miss P.M. Hall, Uppermill.
Miss B. Lees, Arthurs, Greenfield.
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Boocock, Lydgate.
Mr. Robert D. Scott, Tilston, Cheshire.
Mr. Kenneth Hulme, Delph.
Debra Heathcote Cline, Mechanicsburg. PA.
U.S.A.

Miss M. Spring, Sheffield.
Mr. P.B. Crossley, Prestwich.
Mr. & Mrs. Malcom Hill, Grasscroft.
Mr. Ian Collins, Hove.
Mrs. V.E. Williams, Ecclestone, Lancs.
Mrs. Hazel M. Wright, Peterborough.

Mrs. Hazel Wright was related to the late Mrs. Mary Byrom of Greenfield, whose family scrapbook of newspaper cuttings relating to Saddleworth was passed on to her and in turn has deposited these into our Archives. Another welcome contribution to our collection. Mrs. Wright has often stayed at the Bridge House Tea Rooms, formerly The Bridge Inn, where her Broadbent ancestors lived in 1852.

Since we forwarded a copy of the Saddleworth Villages book to Mrs. Esther Shaw Lawn of San Obispo, California, we have received an acknowledgement wishing continued success to the Society and expressing pleasure at our keeping in touch with our transatlantic members and transmitting another batch of Saddleworth history.

Subscription rates to the Society are : Annual

Family Membership.....	£14.00	Single Membership.....	£12.00
Retired Family & Single	£ 9.00	Student Membership	£ 9.00

Overseas.... Family & Single USA & Canada £15.00 or 40 dollars.
Overseas.... Family & Single Australia & New Zealand £15.00 Sterling.

We still have a few outstanding subscriptions for this year and may we remind members that their cheques are most welcome to aid Society funds.

Sadly we have to report the death of Mrs. Margaret Waugh, of Stonebreaks, who was a valuable member of the Society. Her family had occupied Stonebreaks over the years and she had contributed much information regarding her family's tenure at Stonebreaks to Canon Aime in his role as Archivist and subsequently her papers are being passed to the Archives, this being her desired bequest to the Society.

Membership enquiries: Mrs. E. Broadbent, Hon. Membership Secretary,
Pastures Farm Flat, Back o'th' Low Road,
Strinesdale, Saddleworth. OL4 3SG
Tel: 0161 785 8268

SADDLEWORTH WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

The following courses have been arranged commencing in September 2003

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES OF SADDLEWORTH

Tutor: ALAN PETFORD

Saddleworth is rich in history. Come and discover what the fields and hedges, roads and homesteads have to tell us about the way Saddleworth has evolved through a thousand years.

starting Monday 22nd September 2003 11 meetings
PLEASE NOTE LATER STARTING DATE

SEASIDE PLEASURES - A History of coastal resorts in Northern England and Wales

Tutor: MICHAEL FOX

Blackpool, Scarborough, Bridlington, Llandudno At one time everyone took their holidays by the sea. Join in this exploration of the history and allure of the northern seaside resort, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth.

starting Tuesday 16th September 2003 11 meetings

EGYPTOLOGY --DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

Tutor: VICTOR BLUNDEN

This course will look in detail at the preparation that the Ancient Egyptians made for the afterlife; mummification, the design and decoration of a tomb, and the methods employed (both physical and magical) to preserve the body and protect the Ka (spirit/soul) from harm will all be covered.

starting Thursday 18th September 2003 11 meetings

CANALS AND RAILWAYS

Tutor: IAN MOSS

Transport was the foundation of the Industrial Revolution, first the canals, then railways, were the arteries of that historic change. Slides taken over forty years will illustrate the story.

starting Thursday 18th September 2003 11 meetings

All courses will be held at Saddleworth School, Uppermill starting at 7.15 p.m.

For further details ring D.Latimer Tel. 0161 633 3205

Press Release

‘Canal Mania!’

Opens at Saddleworth Museum & Art Gallery,
Uppermill on Saturday 8th November 2003.

‘Canal Mania!’ is a children’s exhibition inspired by
research undertaken by WOW – Wild over Waterways.

According to WOW research 1 in 10 children in the
North West of England think that canals were built to
provide homes for ducks.

One in 8 seven to fourteen year olds believe canals were
built to catch rainwater, and nearly half of the children
questioned did not know that canals were man made.

Through a series of simple interactives, dressing up and
children’s activities, ‘Canal Mania!’ hopes to explain the
history and wildlife of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to
children.

The exhibition was made possible by a £500 donation
from the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Society.

Open until Easter 2004.

Open Monday-Sunday 1-4pm

Admission; Adults £2; Concessions £1; Family ticket £4;
Children under 5 Free

Current Society Publications

Books

Saddleworth Villages, illustrated with sketches by Geoff Toms, text by Saddleworth Historical Society Members. Price to Society members £13.95 Please order using the form enclosed in this bulletin,

Saddleworth From the Air by Professor Barri Jones. £12.50

Saddleworth 1914-18: The Experience of a Pennine Community During the Great War by K. W. Mitchinson. Soft back £5.00, hard back £10.00

Cherry Valley Chronicles: Letters From Thomas Buckley and Family – Immigrants to Cherry Valley and Milburry, Massachusetts, USA, to His Son Ralph Buckley and Family, of Dobcross and Delph in Saddleworth, transcribed by Maurice Dennett. £5.00

Passage Through Time: A History of Saddleworth Roads and Track-ways by Bernard Barnes. £5.95

With Ammon Wrigley in Saddleworth by Sam Seville, son-in-law and companion of the writer and poet. £2.95

The Saddleworth Story: A Collection of Historical Essays (WEA publication). £2.00

Huddersfield Narrow Canal: A Compendium of Articles From the Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin on the Construction of the Canal. £3.60

Local Interest Trails

Walks around Saddleworth illustrated with notes on local history and landscape. £1.20 each.

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Delph, Heights and Grange | 7. Delph |
| 2. Uppermill | 8. Lydgate and Grotton |
| 3. Greenfield | 9. Dobcross |
| 4. Huddersfield Narrow Canal | 10. Diggle |
| 5. Grasscroft | 11. Castleshaw |
| 6. Denshaw | |

Maps and Plans

Ordnance Survey Maps
Lees
Oldham East
Lydgate

Churchyard Plan: The Old Graveyard at Saddleworth Church. £1.80

Churchyard Plan: The Lower Graveyard at Saddleworth Church. £3.00

Street Guide to Saddleworth: An A2 Comprehensive Street Map of the Area. £1.20

Microfiche

Delph Wesleyan Chapel: Baptisms
Wrigley Mill

Pamphlets

An Address to the Various Classes of Men in Saddleworth: Shewing the Necessity of Supporting the Plan Laid Down for Augmenting the Price of Labour in the Woollen Manufactory, Describing the Distressed Situation of the Parish in 1795 by Daniel Nield. £0.75

Items are available at the Saddleworth Museum and at local bookshops, or by post, adding 20% for postage and packing, from the Society's Publications Officer: Mr Graham Griffiths, 6 Slackcote, Delph, Saddleworth, Yorkshire OL3 6AT

J. HINDLE.

