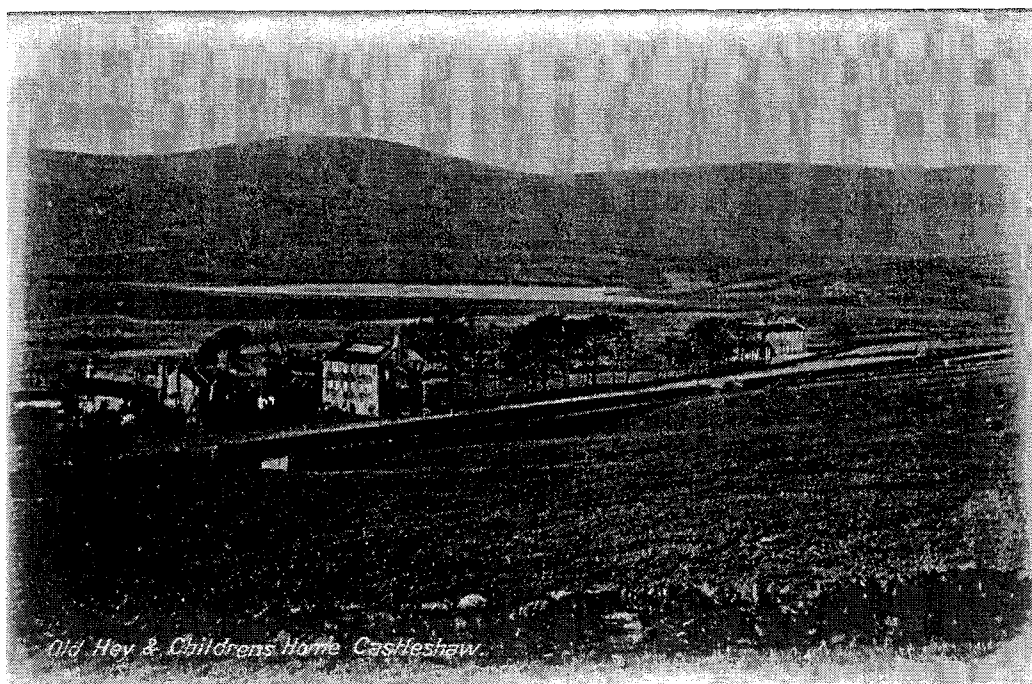


Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin



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Bulletin of the Saddleworth Historical Society

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Cover illustration: The Castleshaw Valley: Old Hey lies on the ancient trackway and the
Friarmere boundary Saddleworth Museum collection: M/P/Dpcas

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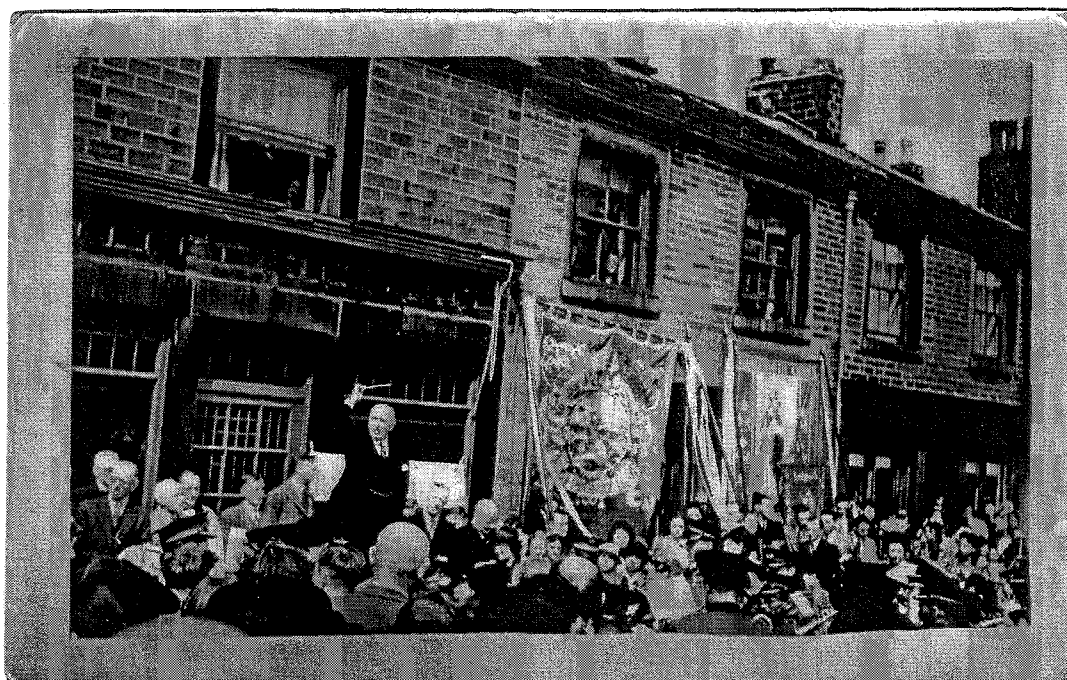
The Bulletin aims to reflect and encourage interest in all aspects of the history of Saddleworth. It relies on a regular supply of articles, letters, short reviews, etc. from members and others. Fresh material is required constantly, and should be sent to the Editor, who will be happy to discuss ideas 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. There are links to other Saddleworth Web sites.

Whit Friday in Uppermill Square



Saddleworth Museum collection: M/P/P

Whit Friday in Uppermill

Albert Broadbent

Referring to the painting illustrated in the *SHS Bulletin* 34.(2).2004 page 24, figure 3. The footnote is quite clear and I have been in touch with the painter Ron Birch. Both he and his daughter Heather agree that the picture refers to a Whit *Friday* and not to a Sunday.

However, you don't have to look very far to find that Whit processions took place on other days than on Fridays. My first 'walk' was in 1922 and my last was in 1932 although, depending on the exigencies of the nature of my job, I managed to get into Uppermill at some part of the day.

Whit Friday in Uppermill began about 8.00 am. The weather was always kind and bands could already be heard as they arrived by train, perhaps, and always 'our' band, Glazebury, was there as they marched up via Oldham Road and High Street from Greenfield station and it was always '*Hail Smiling Morn*' which floated across the valley in the brisk morning air.

All over Saddleworth people would be making their way with the children – especially the children, it was their day – to assembly points: churches and Sunday Schools. In Uppermill there were three processions: St Chad's, Uppermill; Congregational (Ebenezer); and Uppermill Wesleyans. I don't think that they necessarily followed the same routes. In fact I am sure they didn't. The Wesleyans took a route which I estimate covered about, perhaps, little more than a mile. A 'rule of thumb' was that Greenfield railway station to Saddleworth station was (is) about one mile, a lesson I learned at my Grannie Holden's knee.

We assembled before the Chapel in The Square where the band would be at 'stand by'. The elders of the Chapel and Sunday School stalwarts like Sam Buckley, Oliver Schofield, the Holdens, the Kenworthys, Buckleys, Bradburys, Shaws, Redmans, Dysons, Baileys, Platts and so many others were waiting. The Minister would be last to arrive, when the band would strike up, following the big drum's opening beats; it was all very thrilling to a little boy. The route never varied from year to year. Along High Street from The Square going towards the railway viaduct, past Kenworthy Mill, Drill Hall [*until recently The Village Manor Restaurant, now a housing development, Ed.*] and Masonic Hall. The procession then turned right to proceed up Ryefields Drive which, which in those days, was a private road to Ryefields House only.

When the procession reached the house it was received by Mr Reuben and Mrs Alice Bradbury with the children misses Anne, [*second name not given, Ed.*], George and Peter, who was about my age. A couple of hymns would be sung, accompanied by the band, a few friendly words were exchanged and off we went; it was much easier for the children and older folk walking back *down* the drive to the main road. It was 'left wheel' at the main road and the procession carried on through the Square, left at School Street, now Church Road; straight on, under the railway bridge and on to Heathfields, the residence of Charles Edward Kenworthy and Mrs Kenworthy. Again, the band played and the walkers sang a couple of hymns, after which we all marched

back to The Square for the united sing. Old photographs, some of which I have, give some idea of the huge crowds involved. The assembly was conducted from the plinth of the old gas lamp, which did its best to light the area before electricity came to Saddleworth about the mid-twenties. I cannot remember a woman ever conducting but, amongst the men who did, I can think of Hervey Rhodes of Diggle and Ferdie Clifton of Uppermill Wesleyans.

After the united sing everyone dispersed for lunch (dinner). The afternoon was occupied by each church or denomination retiring to its own venue for children's games and sports. The Wesleyans always took the 'Back Meadow' for the afternoon. The band would assemble, perhaps in The Square, and march the short distance down High Street, turning right and crossing the South end of St Mary's Gate, via a short but quite steep piece of ground, made its way past the rear of St Chad's House and the Urban District Council offices and into the field. The band was placed in 'concert order' at a suitable location with a circle of chairs for the bandsmen. In my younger days, women and young girls were beginning to take up brass playing. My uncle 'Puff' Wrigley (trombone) had two girls: my cousins Norah and Nancy. The former played cornet whilst the latter played trombone. There was a tug of war for younger and not so young men. Races for boys and girls: flat races, potato, three-legged, sack and egg and spoon races for all. There were small prizes for winners, kindly donated by local trades or wealthier donors. After the formal events it was free for all and the band continued to play until it was time to prepare for the contests. There was a band contest in Uppermill Square, Greenfield and various other places in the district: Lees, Delph, Oldham et al.

I well remember the contest at Uppermill. Bands were being ferried all over Lancashire and Yorkshire, by charabanc (motor-coaches). These were the arrangements in Uppermill. In my younger days the contests were held in The Square, West side. The band ring was planks on oil drums or trestles. I guess that the ring would be about where you see the Sunday School or Church banners in figure 3 of *SHS Bulletin* 34.(3).2004. I reckon that is about where, in my day, Harry 'pump' Pearson had a general ironmongery business but particularly cycles and paraffin.

During the year volunteers collected for the Whit Friday Band Fund – no raffles etc were allowed at the Wesleyan chapel or school! Harry Thornton of Pickhill used to collect our family contribution from my granddad at the Old Manor House – the news agents [*now Dentist's and Travel Agent, Ed.*]

The adjudicator for the Band Contest was accommodated in the front bedroom of a house in Tame Street, which overlooked The Square. I do not remember the number but I remember the residents very well indeed. They were Harry (Tripey) Whitehead, Mrs and son, Will, a couple of years older than I was. The window, sliding sash type, as most were in Saddleworth at that time, was partly open so that the band could be heard. In later years this arrangement was discontinued, perhaps to avoid increasing numbers of spectators and of course listeners. The contest ring was moved to 'Wakes Field' where the Hopkinson Close old folks' home was built [*now site of another new housing development, Ed.*], a rough patch of ground owned, I think, by the U.D.C. This new arrangement for Band Contests worked well for some years but the big disadvantage was that although the adjudicator was inside a bell tent and unable to see

the name of the competing band, which was shown on the board which was carried before it, the name was clearly audible as people in the crowd repeated it.

The arrangements in Uppermill were that bands assembled at one of the pubs and at the time they were given they were taken under the wing of one 'Johnie Indi', a well-known character but I have no idea what his real name was. He wore some sort of uniform with a sort of bandsman's cap or perhaps it was a military cap of some sort. He was in charge of the piece of blackboard horizontally attached to a pole. He had to write the name of the particular band he was escorting up to the contest ring and then return to the *Hare and Hounds* or *Wagon* or whichever public house was hosting the bands at the time.

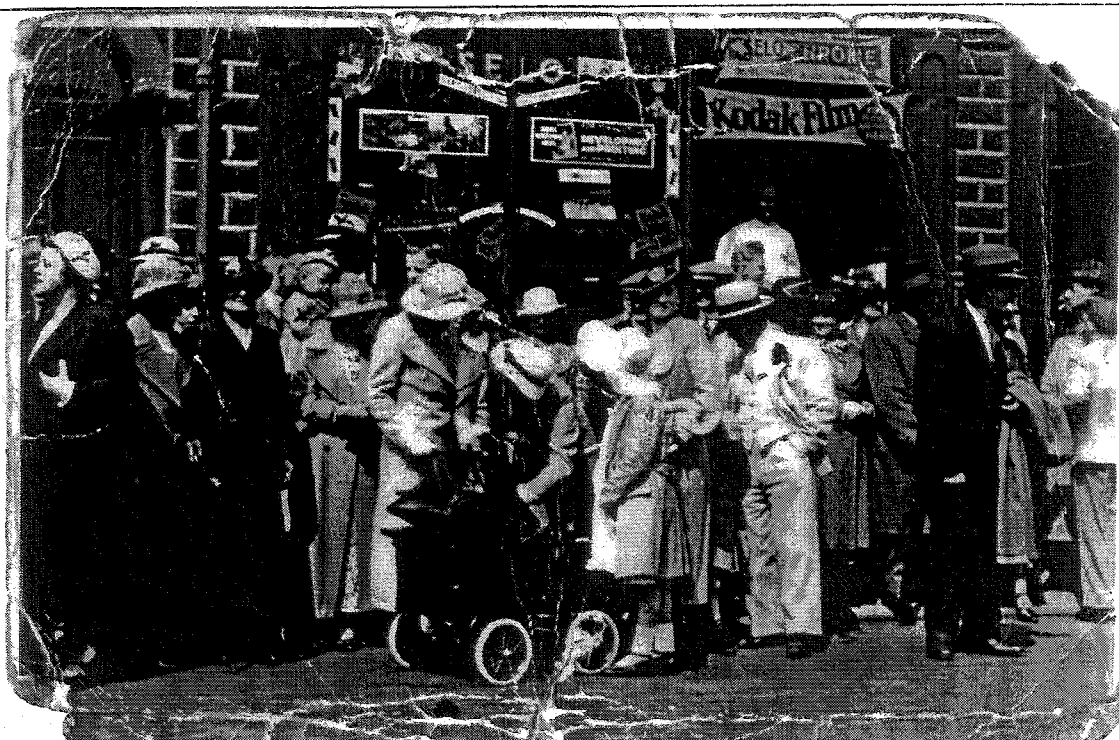
During the summer holidays, which included 'Wakes' week, there was always a Wakes fair. Perhaps a large steam-driven round-about or carousel; or sometimes twin 'steamboats' which would carry a number of adults and some children; coconut shies; rifle range; penny rollers; one-armed bandits; and all from across the Atlantic I imagine. Not to mention Tom Tweed, who had his butcher's shop there at one time.

I cannot leave the subject of Uppermill Whit Fridays without a mention for one of the most colourful of Saddleworth well-known characters; a contemporary of Joe o' Lukes, Ammon Wrigley, Ben Dransfield, Lewis Murgatroyd, Ben Greenhalgh. I refer to Ernest Schofield, Ernest o' Derby's. Schofield's farm was at Carr Barn. Ernest was all over Uppermill on Whit Friday and you couldn't miss him; in and out of all the pubs and greeting everybody; he was six foot plus, without an ounce of fat. He had a pet: a nanny-goat which followed him everywhere. He was tee-total; in his younger days he had been a well-known tearaway, but long before my time he had reformed. Nevertheless, there was a lot of drinking went on in Uppermill on Whit Friday, which I suppose tended to tarnish the day with its religious significance.



Whit Friday Ebenezer Chapel
banner

Saddleworth Museum collection: M/P/P



Whit Friday Uppermill 1935/6

Saddleworth Museum collection: M/P/P

Christmas in Saddleworth

Paul Fryer

One hundred and twenty years ago (1880)

In the warehouse of the Ram Head Mill, Uppermill, on December 18th, there was a tea, provided by the owner. Dancing and singing continued into the evening, to the music of the Brothers Gardiner. Meanwhile, at the *Railway and Commercial Hotel*, Springhead, the employees of the County End Mill Company sang and danced to the sounds provided by the mill's own brass band.

On December 15th, at Bentfield Cricket Club, there was an evening of entertainment from a show called 'merry Moments', put on by Mr H. Liston.

One hundred years ago (1905)

The opening of 1905 was celebrated a little too much by one Saddleworth resident. On January 4th 1905, Ormrod Sharples Walsh was charged at Saddleworth Police Court with being drunk and disorderly. PC Taylor gave evidence that Walsh had been found drunk, and that he had wanted to be locked up. Walsh told PC Taylor that Manchester prison was the best he had ever been in. They would give him beef without the bone, and he said he would never go to Saddleworth workhouse because his wife was there. Superintendent Prosser said that Walsh had been convicted three times during the previous year. Walsh cheekily commented: 'four times!' to much laughter in the court. The Chairman of the Bench responded: 'very well, we shall indulge you again, you can have fourteen days hard labour.'

After an interval of some weeks for repairs and renovations, the St Thomas Mission Church, Delph, re-opened for divine service on December 17th. At 10.30 am special psalms and the anthem, '*I Love the Habitation*' were rendered. The Reverend Lawrence, vicar of Dinting, unveiled a memorial window dedicated to the glory of God, and to the memory of the Reverend S. H. John, only son of the vicar of Friarmere, who had died in a cycling accident near Leeds two years earlier. The window depicted both St John and the Holy Virgin. The evening service was so crowded that some people had to be turned away.

On the same day a choir festival was held at Uppermill Wesleyan Chapel. Solos and choruses from *The Messiah* were given. Mr W. Bailey delivered a short address on 'Christmas Presents'. The collection raised £4.00 for the organ fund.

There was also tragedy. On December 22nd a girl named Dora Walker discovered the body of a man at Wicken Clough Brook, near St Chad's Church. He was almost submerged in the water, having fallen down a twenty foot embankment, injuring his head. There was evidence that he had tried to recover himself, but he had become overtaken with fatigue, fallen and drowned. The man was well dressed and had a silver watch. At the subsequent inquest at Saddleworth workhouse the man was

identified as William Houghton of Ashton. He was a collier, but had recently been receiving treatment for 'nerves'.

Fifty years ago (1955)

There were plenty of parties to choose from in 1955. Saddleworth Drama Club's Christmas party was held at Greenfield Co-operative Hall. A highlight of the evening was the all-male 'mannequin parade', introduced by two heralds, Katherine Howard and Margaret Blackwell, as 'Fashion: Today, Tomorrow and the Day After'. Dancing was to the music of the Ken Shore Trio. A speciality number: '*Christmas Alphabet*' (the Christmas number one by Dickie Valentine) was sung by the girl heralds, with Nancy Delaney on the piano. Around one hundred and eighty people attended the Blue Ball at the Mechanics' Hall, Uppermill, organised by the Saddleworth Conservative Association. Dancing was enjoyed with music by Frank Shaw and his band, with Councillor A. Pearson as MC. At the same venue that Christmas, one hundred and twenty members of Uppermill Darby and Joan Club enjoyed a turkey tea. The oldest person there was eighty two years old Mrs Henthorn of Diggle. On New Year's Eve there was a whist drive and dance at the Parochial Hall, Uppermill, with over three hundred in attendance. When the dancing stopped at 11.45 pm, hand-bell ringers played two carols before ringing in the New Year.

A flash of lightening on Boxing Day turned Mr and Mrs Shaw's Christmas into a nightmare when it struck their seventeenth-century house at Dene Head Farm [sic], at the head of the Diggle Valley. The chimney stack was shattered, a hole was blown in the attic roof and the upstairs window was splintered. Soot littered the dining room floor and flakes of plaster fell off the ceiling and walls.

Twenty years ago (1985)

Saddleworth Players presented a mock horror as their Christmas play as the Spextra Group put on '*The Gypsy's Revenge*'. It concerned an evil lord of the manor who had his wicked way with the village girls and then murdered them. Then a baby turned up, already four feet tall, covered with hair, and eating un-skinned rabbits. The play was a succession of werewolves, murders and laughs.

On December 29th, five members of the Aces High parachute team landed from 7,000 feet beside the *Roebuck Inn*. A crowd turned up to watch as the team welcomed the new landlords to the Inn. The stunt was organised by Kevin Kelly, who dressed as Spiderman for the occasion. He was a friend of the new joint landlord, Peter Walters. Kevin had planned to make the jump dressed as Santa, but he could not get clearance.

New Year's Day 1985 saw the Royton Bluefins take their first plunge into Redbrook Reservoir, Stanedge, to welcome the New Year. The event raised money for the Oldham special Care Baby Unit. Many of the women swimmers decided to dress in sexy underwear, rather than the conventional swimming costume.

For the first time Saddleworth Parish Council organised a Christmas lights competition. The Swan Inn, Delph, had the honour of winning the first award as best illuminated pub. The Delph Chippy took the best illuminated shop prize. The awards were presented at *The Swan* by the Council Chairman, Councillor David Needham. There was also an additional surprise award to Val's Florists of Grotton. The shop display was not

illuminated, but the judges were so impressed with the window decorations that a new award of best decorated shop window was quickly established. The main two winners received a model pub and model shop, with internal illumination. Val's Florists received a clog, with a Christmas tree sprouting from it.

References

<i>Oldham Standard</i>	December 15 1880,	December 16 1905
<i>Oldham Chronicle</i>	December 23 1905,	December 22 1955
	December 28 1955,	December 31 1955
	December 16 1985,	December 27 1985
	December 31 1985,	

<i>Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter</i>	December 18 1880,	December 24 1880
	December 23 1905,	December 23 1955
	January 6 1956	

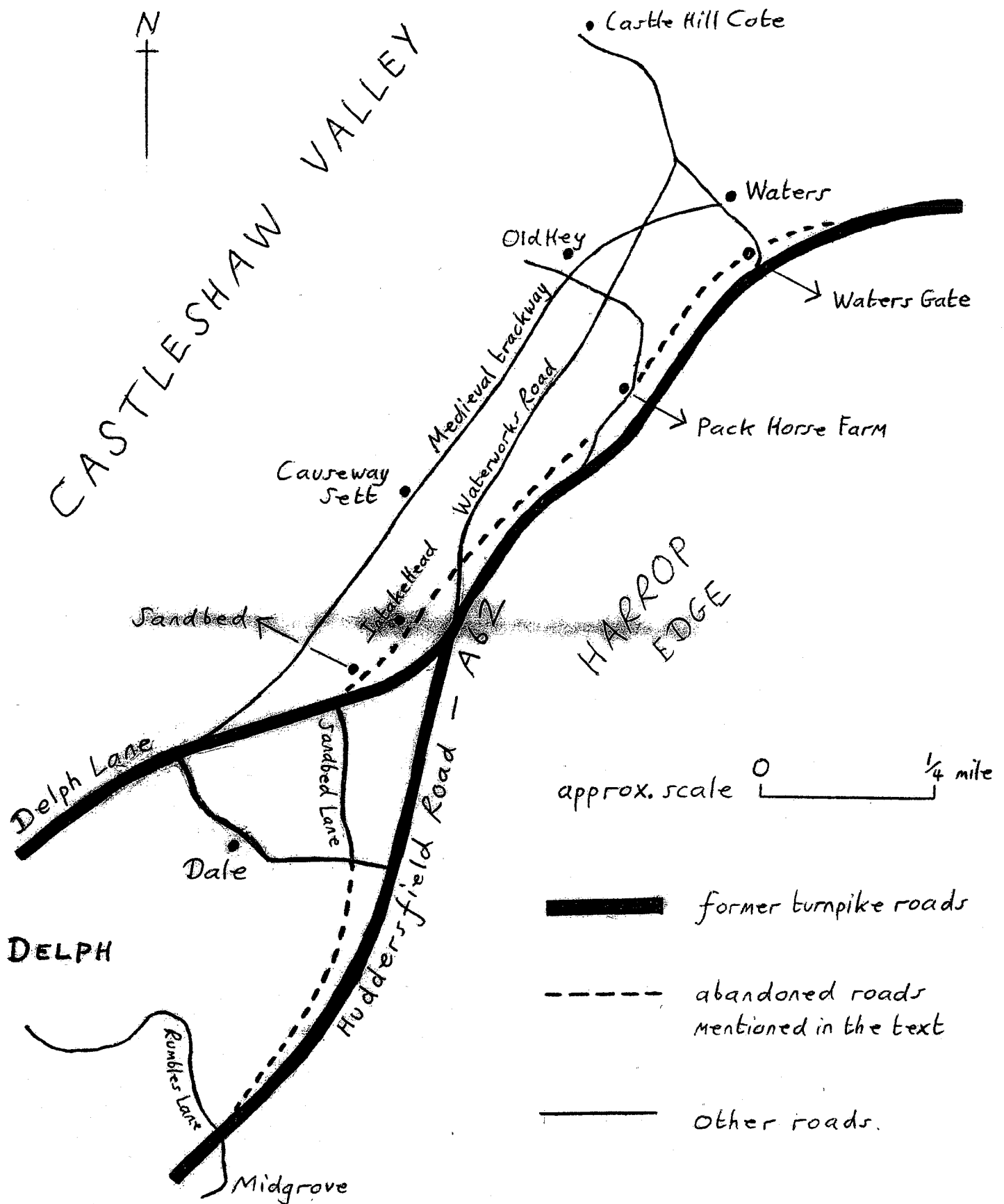


Fig. 1 — Roads north-east of Delph

Exploring and interpreting abandoned roads in Saddleworth

Michael Fox

Although many old roads in Saddleworth continue in use in one form or another, others have been abandoned in whole or in part. In this article I examine a selection of such disused roads and, with the assistance of contemporary maps and other sources, try to interpret from their present day remains some of the reasons why they were abandoned. A subsidiary aim has been to shed light on the factors that brought about change to the road network as a whole in the district between the mid-eighteenth century and the end of the nineteenth. Playing the road detective in Saddleworth is far from easy as the physical traces of former roads here are sometimes faint and often confusing, whilst documentary evidence tends to be scant. My conclusions are somewhat tentative, therefore, and I would encourage readers to find better ones if they can!

It should be noted that I have focussed solely on those roads and sections of roads that have been abandoned completely, no longer being used for any purpose, including as footpaths or access to farmland. Whilst sketch maps have been included, it would be of help to have a copy to hand of the Saddleworth Historical Society (S.H.S.) publication *'Saddleworth Surveyed'* (Barnes, Buckley, Hunt and Petford, 1983). This is referred to in the text as 'SS'. Ordnance Survey maps would also be of assistance. I would recommend the S.H.S. Countryside Guides – 'SCG North' or 'SCG South' in the text - as their clear depiction of field boundaries is a great aid when comparing the present day scene to the past. For fuller historical details of many of the roads mentioned, reference should be made to the excellent *'Passage Through Time'* (Barnes, S.H.S., 1981), which is denoted by 'PTT'. (After completing this article, I discovered that, with the exception of *'Passage Through Time'*, all the publications mentioned are currently out of print! Hopefully, readers will find my diagrams an adequate substitute, whilst a standard OS map should suffice in lieu of the 'Countryside Guides'). The obvious point must be stated that whilst some of the remains dealt with are accessible, others are on private land and permission of the owners should be sought before visiting these.

We begin this survey with turnpikes. Several of these toll roads were built in Saddleworth during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Whilst all of them continue in use today as roads, they have been subject to numerous changes over the years. One aspect of this has been the replacing of some sections with new alignments. Much physical evidence remains where this happened. A good instance is to be found about half a mile to the east of Denshaw. Here can be seen the former course of the Huddersfield and New Hey turnpike - the present day A640 - which was opened in about 1807 (PTT, p. 70). The construction by Oldham Corporation of a reservoir in a section of the valley of the River Tame, through which this road ran, enforced its diversion in about 1880. The portion of the abandoned road that was not submerged by the new reservoir is still plainly visible as a curved depression several hundred yards in length (SCG North, GR 984 108).

Also still easy to see are the remains of a former turnpike near Millstone Edge, to the north east of Diggle. Viewed from the vicinity of Bleak Hey Nook, half a mile to the south west, these remains appear as a straight line, approximately two hundred yards in length and rising in a diagonal across the slope to just below the summit of the ridge. This is part of the first route adopted by the Wakefield and Austerlands turnpike road, the Act for the building of which was passed in 1758 (PTT, pp 35-6). Presumably as this original alignment of what was an important trans-Pennine route-way proved too steep for wheeled traffic – the sharpness of the gradient is still evident today – a new and easier course was adopted from Standedge Foot in about 1815 (PPT, p. 38). It would appear that once this had been done the earlier road was abandoned completely: certainly it does not appear on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map (SS, p. 109). (This is only one of numerous abandoned roads on the Standedge ridge as a whole, but as the others are located over the Saddleworth border they fall outside the scope of this article. For comprehensive information on this fascinating area, see PTT, pp 38 and 40, and Keevil G., *'Standedge Guide'*, Huddersfield, 1986, pp 12-16).

More challenging to interpret are the physical remains of the several abandoned roads at the southern end of the Castleshaw valley, near Delph. As both contemporary maps and documentary sources are vague, these remains are of particular relevance in reaching an understanding of why and when some roads ceased to be used here.

The spur to change in this locality was given by the building of turnpike roads. The first of these, the original line of the Wakefield and Austerlands Trust, was opened between Delph and Standedge in about 1759. It passed near to the hamlet of Sandbed before striking across the lower slopes of Harrop Edge (Fig. 1). Between Packhorse Farm and Waters Gate, where the ancient trackway from Delph to Standedge via Causeway Sett was joined, the turnpike is likely to have incorporated an earlier road. This was not the case between Sandbed and Packhorse, however, the turnpike taking a new course between these points (PTT, p. 36). Presumably because the pre-existing road from Sandbed past Intake Head to Packhorse would have been seen as inferior to the turnpike – probably having been unsuitable for wheeled traffic, for example – it would seem to have been quickly abandoned. Certainly, it is not recorded on a map of the projected route of the Huddersfield Canal that was prepared in the mid-1790s and gives a clear depiction of contiguous roads ('Plan of the Proposed Canal between Huddersfield and Ashton-under-Lyne', 1793, West Yorkshire Archive Service). It is unclear why the builders of the turnpike chose to form a new line between Sandbed and Packhorse. Looking at this area today, the abandoned road past Intake Head certainly appears to offer a more direct and better-graded route than its replacement.

The second phase of change undergone by roads in this locality occurred in the 1790s and was brought about by a general upgrading of the Wakefield turnpike between Oldham and Standedge (PTT, p. 38). One consequence of this programme was the replacing of the first line of the turnpike between Packhorse and Waters Gate by a new section a few yards higher up the hillside than the original: this is the present day A62. The superseded stretch is omitted from the Vestry map of 1822 (SS, p. 79) and had probably been out of use for several years by this date. Why it was felt necessary to build a new line at this point is not clear, although the former approach to Packhorse from the direction of Delph would appear to have been relatively steep and sharply curved.

The turnpike improvements of the 1790s are also likely to have influenced the abandonment of another stretch of road further down the valley. This was part of a trackway that connected the old road from Delph to Dobcross (SS, p. 23) at Midgrove with the Sandbed area. The new alignment of the Wakefield turnpike that was built at this period from Austerlands to a junction with the original (1759) line just above Intake Head, ran almost parallel with the older road from Midgrove. The link that was provided from the new turnpike in the direction of the hamlets at Dale struck directly across the road from Sandbed and would have offered a better surfaced and only slightly less direct route for traffic to and from Midgrove (Fig. 1). Again, closure of the pre-existing road may well have been effected very quickly. Evidence for this is that it is not shown on the 1822 Vestry map (SS, p. 84).

Remains are to be found of all three of the abandoned stretches of road just dealt with. Clearest are those of the original turnpike between Packhorse and Waters Gate, the best location to view them being a public footpath which crosses the former road just below the A62 on the Delph side of the last-mentioned (SCG North, GR 998 091). Also easy to trace is the route of the road from Packhorse Farm to Sandbed, which appears as a broad line slanting across the hillside fields. That the course of this road is still so easy to see more than two hundred years after its probable total abandonment would suggest that it once carried heavy traffic. A possibility is that by offering a more direct and less steeply graded route than the medieval trackway past Causeway Sett, it may have come to be used in preference to this for packhorse traffic between Lancashire and Yorkshire. This is no more than speculation, however.

Turning to the road between Sandbed Lane and Midgrove, only traces can be seen today, these being in the fields to the immediate north of Delph cricket ground (SCG North, GR 991 080). It would be unsafe to conclude from the paucity of remains that this road was only minor in nature. Despite having been discarded several decades previously, its course stands out clearly in photographs that were taken from Knott Hill in about 1880 and 1900 respectively and are now in the Peter Fox collection at Saddleworth Museum. Perhaps in addition to meeting purely local requirements, it fed traffic from the Castleshaw valley as a whole into and out of the aforementioned route from Delph to Dobcross. Again, more research would be necessary to gain a clearer picture.

On the opposite, southern, side of Delph is another locality in which the pattern of roads was heavily influenced by the Wakefield and Austerlands turnpike. Here also, are physical remains to aid interpretation of what happened and why.

If you stand at the point marked 'X' on the sketch map (Fig. 2) and look south it is easy to visualise Thurston Clough Road as having once passed on the opposite side of the house at Set Stones than now. The shallow, curving depression that is faintly discernable along the left (eastern) side of this building could be evidence that such a road existed. Perhaps when the turnpike was being surveyed in the 1750s it was judged that a straighter and less sharply graded approach to Thurston Clough, which is a steep-sided tributary of the River Tame, was required than was afforded by the pre-existing road, the ancient route-way between Lancashire and Yorkshire. Another location at which it was apparently deemed advantageous for the turnpike to adopt a new course is a short distance to the south of Set Stones. Running a few yards to the east of the stone wall near Greaves Farm that borders Thurston Clough Road, and following the curve of the latter, is a faint and wide depression,

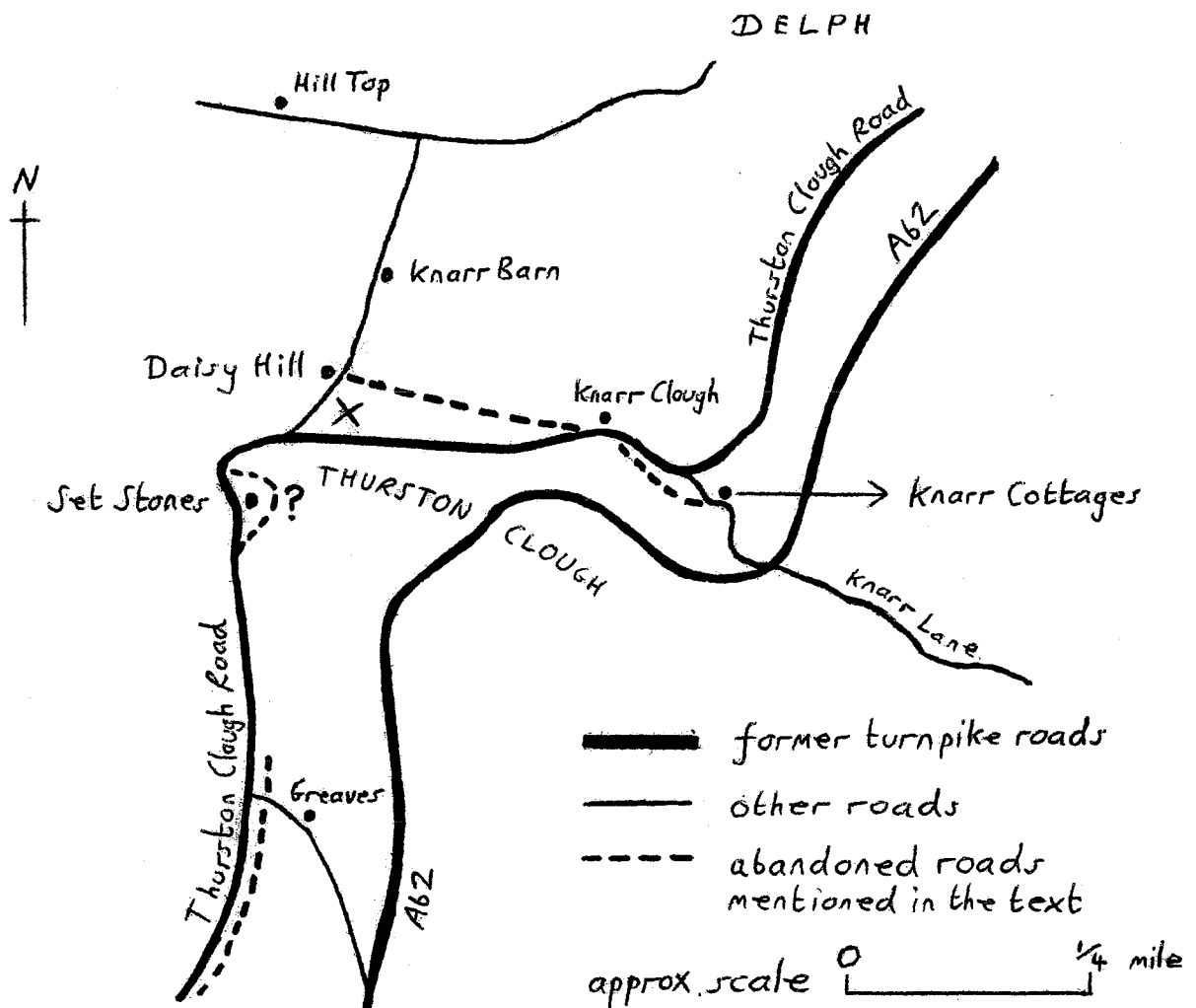


Fig. 2 - Roads south of Delph, at Thurston Clough.

clearly the line of a former road. It is possible that this stretch was ignored and abandoned because it was cheaper to make a new formation alongside rather than reconstruct the old track to turnpike standards.

The position on the northern side of Thurston Clough was somewhat different. The fact that the turnpike adopted an almost completely new line from here to Delph than the old route, which went by way of Hill Top, meant that the question of whether it should utilise or by-pass pre-existing sections of road did not arise. As in the lower Castleshaw valley, it would appear that the main impact of the opening of a turnpike through this area was the superseding and abandonment of those sections of adjoining roads that offered poorer facilities, especially for wheeled traffic.

Such an interpretation would seem to be supported by the physical remains. Clearly visible today, especially when viewed from the southern side of the valley, is the course of a former trackway over the fields between Daisy Hill and Knarr Cottages, this being crossed by the turnpike - now Thurston Clough Road - in the vicinity of Knarr Clough House (Fig. 2). To judge from contemporary maps, this track was abandoned in two stages. The Farrar estate map of 1770 omits the section between Daisy Hill and the turnpike, built about ten years previously (SS, p. 23). This would suggest that this short stretch was quickly discarded because the new road provided a better alternative. The same map shows the other part of the pre-existing road, that between the turnpike and Knarr Cottages, as being still in use, however. When the Vestry map was drawn in 1822

this section had also been abandoned, replaced by a short link from the Wakefield road immediately above Knarr Cottages (SS, p. 89). That virtually the whole of the erstwhile road from Daisy Hill is still clearly visible today after many decades of (apparent) total disuse would suggest that it was more than just a link between local farmsteads. Perhaps it was also used by traffic from the Rochdale area to Dobcross and beyond as an alternative route to that from Hill Top through Delph, Dobcross being reached via Tamewater.

Complementing the improvement of the road system itself as a cause of the abandonment of some roads in Saddleworth was the improvement – by enclosure – of the land over which such roads ran. Although many ‘occupation’ roads were laid out to give access to the fields that were created by the extensive enclosures carried out in the district during the first few decades of the nineteenth century, some pre-existing roads were displaced in the process. Harrop Edge provides an example, this area to the west of Diggle having been enclosed in about 1810 (SS, pp. 51–55). Here, sections of established roads were discarded when they could not be conveniently incorporated into the pattern of new fields. The impact on traffic is likely to have been minimal as the roads concerned would already have lost much of their through, cross-Pennine, trade to the turnpikes that had been built along both sides of the ridge in the previous century. One road affected was that from Hunters Hill to Dobcross by way of Sunfield. Traffic using this route at its northern extremity was in effect diverted along the new enclosure roads – Harrop Edge Lane and Hunters Hill Lane – over a distance of approximately a third of a mile. Presumably because the location concerned was an awkward corner of one of the new fields, a short stretch of the abandoned road was left intact and remains clearly visible today on the north side of Hunters Hill Lane above Carr House (SCG North, GR 001 086).

Also still easy to see is another discarded stretch of the same road. A good location from which to view this is the vicinity of Holly Grove (SCG, GR 004 070), from which spot the remains stand out clearly (in spite of a large stand of trees) on the hillside opposite. Aligned north east to south west, the former road appears as a line running from near Ambrose to a junction with Sandy Lane, just to the left (south) of the former stone quarry at Nab End. Throughout its course of several hundred yards the abandoned road is parallel to and a short distance below Sandy Lane. It can be inspected at close quarters from the path that connects the latter with Standedge Road (the A670) near Marslands. The steep gradient of this path is interrupted by a flat area, several feet in width and running from left to right (SCG North, GR 998 072).

Whilst it might safely be assumed that this is the original course of the Dobcross – Sunfield–Hunters Hill road, why it should have been abandoned is less apparent. In particular, the route followed by the present day road possesses no obvious advantages over the former line, having much the same gradient for example. Contemporary maps shed little light on the matter, other than suggesting that the current route of Sandy Lane was established at some time between the 1770s and the 1820s (SS, pp.24 and 85). Perhaps the present alignment was adopted to conform to the boundary of the land that was enclosed on Harrop Edge in about 1810, as mentioned earlier. Another possibility is that the course of the road was altered to provide a better outlet from Nab End quarry which, as a comparison of the 1822 Vestry and 1854 Ordnance Survey maps would indicate (SS pp 85 and 112), was expanding at this period. These theories are purely speculative, however, and more research would be required to help resolve the matter.

In some other parts of Saddleworth the impact that stone quarrying and the making of enclosures had on the pattern of local roads is much easier to interpret from the physical remains. Such an area is the upland to the east of Greenfield and Uppermill where abundant evidence can be found of numerous roads that were laid out to serve new quarries and fields. A typical example of such a road is that whose traces can be discerned over a distance of about a third of a mile from just to the east of Pots and Pans Hill (SCG South, GR 011 051) to the vicinity of Shaw Rocks (SCG South, GR 015 055). This feature is marked on the 1834 Saddleworth Enclosure map (SS, p. 64) as an 'occupation road and bridle way, 10 yds wide No 33' and is one of several roads laid down to provide access to and between sections of land that were earmarked for enclosure in the area at this period. (As Barnes et al point out on page 52 of *'Saddleworth Surveyed'*, however, plans for enclosure in Saddleworth were not implemented in some locations, this being one. Comparison of the enclosure map of 1834 – (SS, p. 64) – with present day OS maps will show that the intention to build walls in the area between Pots and Pans and Shaw Rocks was never put into effect. It would seem likely that the road being discussed was laid out prematurely and may well have been abandoned once this fact became clear. On the 1854 OS map it is marked as being only a footpath).

From Shaw Rocks the road just described descends the hillside, eventually joining onto Knowl Top Lane half a mile to the east of Uppermill (SCG South, GR 005 053). Known as Shaw Gate, this important link between a valley side road and the newly enclosed moors was constructed in about 1817 (SS, p.52). It would seem likely that the choice of route for Shaw Gate above and to the east of Spring Head Farm was influenced by an earlier trackway. The function of this could have been to give landholders access to the moors in order to exercise their rights to obtain peat for fuel or pasture animals, a role that Shaw Gate may well have taken over. Such 'turbary' roads and / or access routes to 'beastgates' were once common in Saddleworth. (PTT, pp 17-18). The evidence for the existence of such a trackway at this location is inconclusive: it is not marked on any contemporary map that the author has seen, whilst the physical remains are faint. On the basis of much close inspection on foot, I would hazard that, immediately before the appearance of this area was changed by the building of stone enclosure walls in the early nineteenth century, a turbary road followed the route shown in Fig. 3. My reading of this landscape may be wrong, however, and I invite other interpretations.

As already indicated, to be found on the same hillside is much physical evidence of the roads that served the stone quarries that were established hereabouts between the late 1700s and the mid-nineteenth century. Whilst the majority of these remains are easily identifiable as quarry roads, some are not so easy to categorise. A case in point is the now abandoned road that runs roughly parallel to, but at a level higher than Shaw Gate (this feature is depicted on Fig. 3 by the dotted line connecting points A and B). Judging from the depth that it has sunk into the hillside, this trackway was once well used, probably over a long period of time. The likelihood that it pre-dates the enclosure of its surroundings is suggested by the fact that a stone enclosure wall runs across it with no evidence of a gateway having been provided. Obvious though these points are, however, they are of little help in identifying what the function of this track was. That its role was to serve stone quarries might be inferred from the existence of several of these near its northern end. Suggesting that it may have been a turbary road, however, is the fact that it runs in a direct line from the cluster of farmsteads at Rye Top, Knowl Top and Pinfold towards open moorland and the upper section of Shaw Gate. But would a road serving this function have been so narrow and well defined? Perhaps it was used for both purposes.

The example just discussed highlights the difficulties of interpreting the physical traces of old roads in Saddleworth. More fieldwork and analysis of contemporary maps and documents will be required before an accurate picture is gained, not only of how many abandoned roads still exist in the district but what their remains can tell us about how and why the functions of roads here have changed over time. I hope readers will have been stimulated to undertake their own research. There are several locations well worthy of study that I have not had the space to cover in this article, whilst I am sure some others have eluded me. Good hunting!

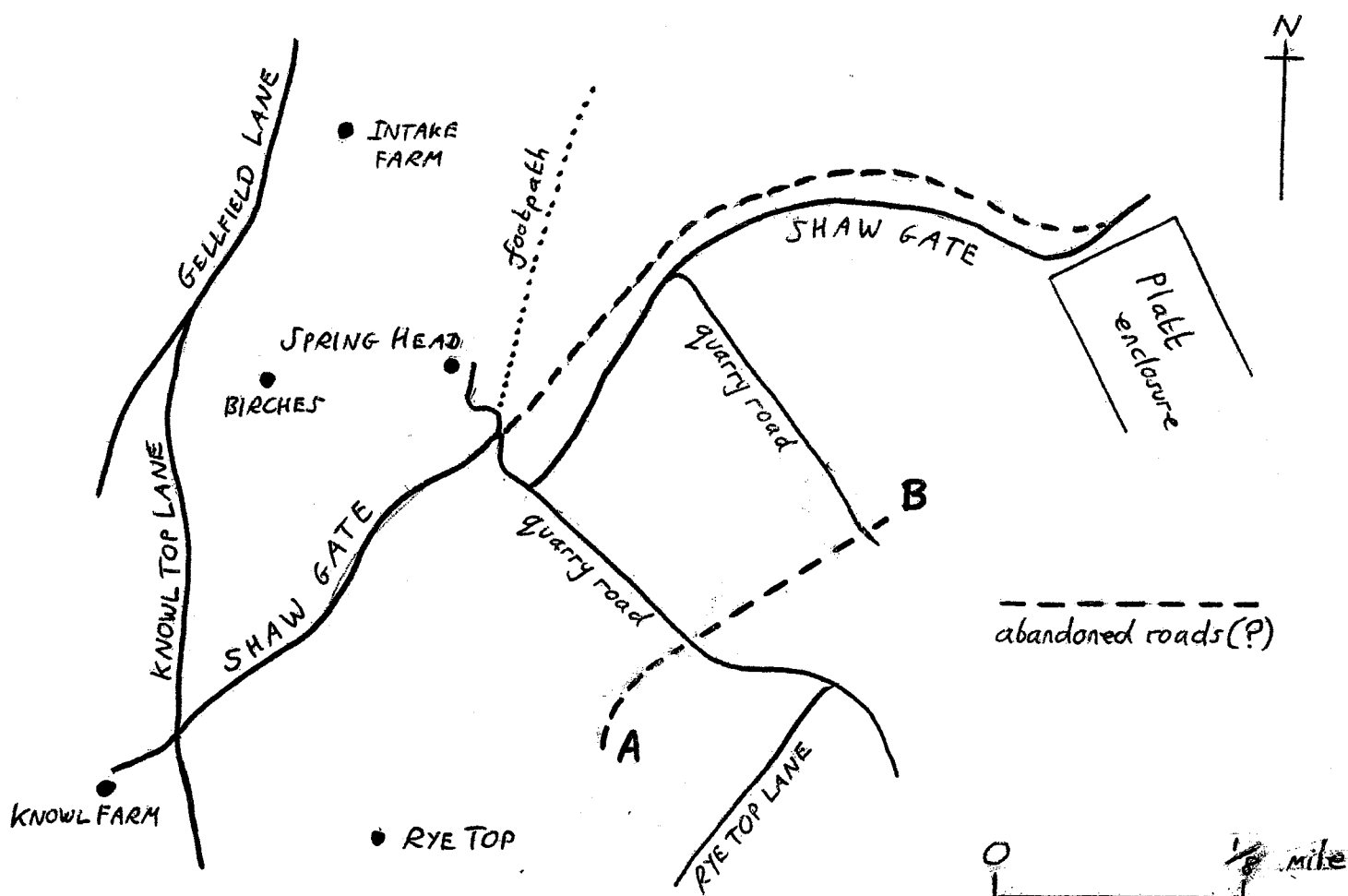


Fig. 3 - Roads east of Uppermill, below Pots & Pans

293.

Howcroft Ann. Quick.

Admitted 28th August 1839. Age 36 Years.
 no religious professions, married, and had five
 children, has been ill several Years, had not
 made any dangerous or premeditated attempt
 to injure any one; the ^{first} attack of the dis-
 ease, no intervals of sanity; Became regular
 temper sulky, inclined to tear her clothes.
 Habits sober and temperate; has shown a
 tendency to suicide, had been under no me-
 dical treatment here, but at Lancaster Asylum.

1839.

Oct 22nd. Is very languid, but without apparent ailment.
 Feet blistered, probably with hot Lin.

1839.

Oct 22nd. To be bathed
 in Tinct. Opia. and
 enveloped in Cotton wool.

23rd. Has had frequent fits with great contraction of the
 muscles of the left side confined.

23rd. Appl. Stimul. injecting

As she refuses to take any
 Bowd. medicines, let her have

an Injection every two
 hours until the bowels

are freely opened.

26th26th. Meat, or Beef

Tea daily.

Dec 8th. Is now in good
 bodily health but continues
 in the same state of mind as
 she has been in for some years
 past. (Dementia)

1842.

Jan 7th. Continues in good bodily
 health, state of mind the same.

May 30. Feet discovered by the nurse, to be extremely hot,
 and covered with dirt, especially around the toes. On
 cleaning them, there are superficial ulcerations between
 many of the toes.

By Surg. Simp. 3rd

Apr. 30. 3rd of the 5th

June 5. Wounds much amended: with the exception of the
 the liability was disappeared.

Discharged

28 July 1842.

To be received into the Poor-house.

Current Society Publications

Books

Saddleworth Villages, illustrated with sketches by Geoff Toms, text by Saddleworth Historical Society Members. Price to Society members £14.95 to Society Members.

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

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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

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Delph Wesleyan Chapel: Baptisms £5.00

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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 by post, adding 20% for postage and packing, from the Society's Publications Officer: Mr Graham Griffiths, 6 Slackcote, Delph, Saddleworth, Yorkshire OL3 5TW.

Many of the Society's Publications can also be purchased, at a retail price which may be different from those listed here, in the Saddleworth Museum Shop.

J. Hindle. Aug. 05

SADDLEWORTH WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

PROGRAMME OF COURSES FOR 2005/6

All classes are held at Saddleworth School, Uppermill from 7.15-- 9.15 p.m.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MEMORY AND AGGRESSION

Tutor:- Anne Buckley

10 meetings starting Monday 12th September 2005

This course is for anyone who wants to learn about memory, aggression and other aspects of psychology. No prior knowledge is needed. There will be an opportunity for some of the interests of the group to be followed. This course will be repeated commencing Monday 9th January 2006.

IDENTIFYING ANTIQUES (1)

Tutor: Denis Page

10 meetings starting Tuesday 13th September 2005

The course aims to give students some points to look for when identifying antiques; to paint a picture of the 'Antique World' with regard to auctions, fairs, books, guides, forgeries and copies and the characters in the antique business.

It includes furniture, silver, gold and other metals, lighting, china and pottery; clocks and watches, shop goods and advertising materials; Art Nouveau and Art Deco design and books, postcards etc.

A further 10 week course covering different aspects will commence on Tuesday 10th January 2006.

GENEALOGY

Tracing your family history

Tutor: Jean Sanders

7 meetings starting Tuesday 4th October 2005

An introduction to Genealogy.

A further 7 week course continuing the aspects of family history research will commence on Tuesday 24th January 2006.

EGYPT'S MIDDLE KINGDOM

Tutor: Victor Blunden

10 meetings starting Thursday 15th September 2005

This course aims to spotlight this little known period of Egyptian history; a period of powerful kings, brilliant artwork and unsurpassed literature. New students are welcome, so come along to find out more about Egypt's last kingdom, its rise to power and its fall from glory.

SOME CANALS AND RAILWAYS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Tutor: Ian Moss

10 meetings starting Thursday 29th September 2005

This course will consider the early canals and the early railways of N.W. England and will then move to the corners of our kingdom where canals aspired to bypass stormy seas and hostile enemies and railways served three very different societies -- Northern Scotland, South West England and Kent

SEASIDE PLEASURES, a History of Coastal Resorts in Northern England & N. Wales

Tutor: Mike Fox

This course will start on Monday 9th January 2006 for 10 weeks.

KENWORTHY LECTURE AND A.G.M.

A talk by Mike Buckley, The Rise and Fall of the Saddleworth Yeoman, 1500-1800

Masonic Hall, Uppermill, Friday 9th September @ 7.30 p.m.

Admission Free, Cheese and Wine

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT THE BRANCH SECRETARY TEL.01457 872881