

Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin



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Bulletin of the Saddleworth Historical Society

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Cover Illustration: Painting of Ragstones, Denshaw Moor, from Ammon Wrigley,
"Songs of a Moorland Parish", Saddleworth, 1912, p. 64.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

Mike Buckley

The last Annual General Meeting was only nine months ago so this year's chairman's report is shorter than usual. Our activities this year have been very much dominated by the production of our new publication, the sequel to Mapping Saddleworth which we published two years ago. At the time we realised that there were far more interesting maps of Saddleworth than could be contained in a single volume so it was planned to issue a second volume of maps before Christmas this year. I am pleased to say we have met our targets and the new book, Mapping Saddleworth II will be launched here in the Museum this Saturday, September 26th. I will return to this later when I review the state of play with our publications.

Your committee took the decision this year to move forward the day of the annual general meeting from December to September. This was for a number of reasons. Firstly, attendance at the last two AGMs has been low due to atrocious December weather and dark winter evenings. The run up to Christmas is always a busy time and I think this has also been a negative factor. Our annual activities and lecture programme also starts in September so it seems logical to start the year with a review of the preceding year's activities and to set the scene for the coming one.

As always there are many people I need to thank for their contribution to the Society.

A few weeks ago we were very sorry to learn that both our Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary, Stanley and Elsie Broadbent, have decided to resign from the committee. This is for health reasons and I know that otherwise they would be keen to continue. We owe Stanley and Elsie an immeasurable debt of gratitude. They joined the society shortly after its inception and have played a key role in its running over a period of forty years. Stanley with his inimitable good humour has lightened many a dull committee meeting and his eloquent prose has raised the standard of the Society's newsletters. An accomplished artist he has illustrated many of the local interest trails, and for many years in his role of publicity officer, designing posters and provided copy for the local newspapers. He and Elsie have also, over a long period, managed the production and distribution of the Bulletin, a time consuming and thankless task.

Elsie, has been a meticulous membership secretary, keeping membership records, sending out reminders to late payers and doing all the attendant administrative functions with flawless efficiency. But Elsie has raised this role above merely a clerical job, entering into correspondence with enquirers and new members and frequently doing research in the parish registers to help them with their quest for Saddleworth ancestors. She has arrived early to open up the building for lectures and committee meeting and stayed to lock up after everyone else has gone. Like Stanley, Elsie's good humour has livened many a committee meeting.

Our thanks go to Stanley and Elsie for all they have done for the Society over many years. We are sorry to lose them. Stanley has often said to me that no-one is indispensable. It's like taking your hand out of a bowl of water he says; the water rapidly fills the void. They will be difficult to replace but no doubt will be replaced. However, it will never be the same. Stanley and Elsie are unique and will be sorely missed. We send them our very best wishes and sincere and heartfelt thanks.

I would also like to thank all the committee for their contributions and support over the year. In addition my thanks go to Michael Fox for editing the newsletter, to Cheryl Westlorton for managing our Family History Internet mailing list, to Alan Haigh for maintaining the Society's website, to Oliver Benson for distributing and promoting our publications to local bookshops, and to the Dorothy Latimer, Christine Barrow, Tony Wheeldon and others for arranging refreshments after our meetings.

The lecture programme over the last year has maintained our usual high standard and once again I would like to express our appreciation to Keith Taylor and Dorothy Latimer for assembling an excellent series of speakers.

At our AGM last year Victor Khadem gave a lecture on 14th Century Saddleworth, an hitherto unexplored period of history. He showed that, far from being a backwater, during this period, Saddleworth was at the forefront of national events. In the new year, Mike Fox's talk presented a novel perspective on Saddleworth's development, by focussing on the role that water played in Saddleworth's industrial and social development. In February we were treated to a viewing of some of the wonderful paintings and objects in the Gallery Oldham, by Sean Baggaley, the curator. As always, Freda Millett's talk in March drew a full house, as Freda entertained and enthralled us in her inimitable way with her insights into what childhood was like in Oldham in the 40s and 50s. Jan Scrine of the Milestone Society in April spoke on local highways and waymarkers. The lecture season ended in June with a talk on stone and stone quarrying in the Halifax district by George Bowers. His talk was equally applicable to our own area of the Pennines and in addition to quarrying, gave an insight into stonemasonry, much of which is now a lost craft.

This summer Alan Schofield programme of guided walks was once again well received and well attended. Alan and other members of the Committee led walks around Saddleworth hillsides, hamlets and villages and the series programme ended with another boundary walk this time the nine mile boundary of Quickmere. The walks have become a much valued part of the Society's annual programme of events and once again our thanks go to Alan for organising them.

The Summer trip to Chester was led by Jim Carr and provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about Chester's Roman origins and importance. Our thanks go to Jim for leading this also to Alan Schofield for organising the event. As in previous years, Jim Carr also gave a number of guided tours of the Castleshaw Roman Forts as part of the Heritage Open Days. Thanks also go to Jim for organising an Industrial Archaeology weekend in June. Unfortunately, the publicity for this was rather late and the low numbers signing up did not justify continuing with the event. We hope to re-run this on a future occasion.

Returning now to our publications. The production of our new publication "Mapping Saddleworth Volume II" has taken much of our time and energy. A publications sub-committee has met monthly and a great deal of hard work has been put in by the committee in producing artwork for the book, writing text and recently in publicising the book launch. The project was progressing very well up to February when we suffered a major set back with the theft of my lap-top computer which contained the results of several months of my work in recreating the 1822 Township map. The work had to start again and it was barely finished by the deadline when the book had to be submitted to the printers. The committee have worked tirelessly during the summer holiday period to keep the project on target and it is only due to their commitment and dedication that we have met our deadlines. We collect the books

from the printers this Friday ready for the launch the next day. It has been a genuine team effort and I would like to name the publications sub-committee and extend to each of them our thanks for their contributions. In alphabetical order Neil Barrow, David Harrison, Jason Harrison, Victor Khadem, Alan Petford, Jean Sanders, Alan Schofield, and John Widdall.

The next festival publication “Saddleworth Hillsides and Hamlets” continues to progress well and is on target for launch at the Saddleworth Festival in 2011.

The Bulletin, has continued to be edited and produced by the publications sub-committee but has suffered a slight set back as publication dates have slipped with the extra effort that has had to go in to meet the Mapping Saddleworth launch deadlines. We have hope to catch up the backlog by Christmas.

I look forward to the next twelve months with the launch of what I believe will be two first class publications. Once again my thanks go to all who have made the last year a great success.

JOSEPH RADCLIFFE (JOE O'TH RAGSTONES) - THE DENSCHAW HERMIT.

Mike Buckley

This article has been prompted by Alison Wild's discovery and transcription of the obituary of Joe of Ragstones in the columns of the Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter. We are indebted to her for permission to publish it here. Thanks are also due to Ruth Greenwood and Christine Seville for permission to publish abstracts from Ammon Wrigley's "Songs of a Moorland Parish" and Sam Seville's "With Ammon Wrigley in Saddleworth".

Joseph Radcliffe was from old Saddleworth yeoman stock. His parents Joshua and Elizabeth Radcliffe lived at Bowkhouse in Denshaw, his grandfather, John Radcliffe of Saddleworth Fold, having bought the Bowkhouse estate in 1743¹. Joseph, the fourth son was baptised at Heights Church on the 2nd of May 1813. The family were well connected, and at the time of Joseph's baptism his father was described as "Gentleman". They claimed descent from the Radcliffe's of Ordsall in Salford, who, from the fourteenth century until the sale of their Saddleworth estates in the early 1600s, were manorial lords of Shawmere. The Saddleworth Radcliffes had earlier lived at Shaw Hall but by the end of the 1690s they had moved to Saddleworth Fold. Joseph's uncle John Radcliffe of Stonebreaks, was a wealthy merchant and manufacturer, a leading Saddleworth figure in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and a prime mover in the purchase of the Saddleworth Manor in 1791 and the Parliamentary Act for the enclosure of the Saddleworth commons some twenty years later. Joseph's mother, Elizabeth, and maternal grandmother, Hannah, were also members of important local landholding families; Elizabeth was one of the Buckleys of Linfitts and his grandmother, who had married into the Buckleys, was a Gartside, another Denshaw yeoman family.

The farm at Ragstones was a creation of the Denshaw Moor enclosure which took place from 1808 -1812. The land of 24 acres had in fact been sold off two years earlier by the enclosure commissioners to fund the enclosure process and was purchased at the time by Joseph's father Joshua Radcliffe². By 1822 the slow process of creating fertile land from the moor had progressed far enough to justify the building of a farmhouse known as "Ragstones", a name derived after the nearby rocky outcrop. The farm is shown on the Saddleworth Township Map of that year³. Joshua Radcliffe died in 1820 and in a deed of 1822 Joseph's mother, as executor of Joshua's will, conveyed the estate at Bowkhouse and the land at Ragstone, together with "the messuage or dwellinghouse and barn lately erected and built thereon now in the tenure of John Fielding", to her children⁴.

By 1841 Joseph Radcliffe, then a young man of 28, had taken up residence at Ragstones. In the census of that year he was described as "farmer". He appears to

¹ RR 310 403. West Riding Registry of Deeds, West Yorkshire Archive Service (Wakefield).

² Mike Buckley, David Harrison, Victor Khadem, Alan Petford and John Widdall (editors). 'Enclosure Maps of Denshaw Moor 1808-12' in *Mapping Saddleworth, Volume 2*. Uppermill, Saddleworth Historical Society, 2010, pp 129-157.

³ *ibid.* 'Plan of the Township of Quick and Parish of Saddleworth in the West Riding of the County of York, 1822', pp 165-229, see specifically Plate I, pp. 172-3.

⁴ HP 503 461. West Riding Registry of Deeds, West Yorkshire Archive Service (Wakefield).

have lived most of his life at Ragstones and in the subsequent censuses of 1851 and 1861 was describing himself as “landed proprietor” and “yeoman”.

An account of his life is given in the obituary columns of “The Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter” and this draws heavily on a letter of a few days earlier by Morgan Brierley, to “The City News”. Radcliffe’s friend David Mallalieu, the millowner of Delph took exception to what he described as “the tone of disparagement” in Brierley’s account and wrote a rebuttal in the next edition of the paper on June 9th.



Supposedly a photograph taken in the 1860s of Joe o'th Ragstones. The dog he is nursing moved while the picture was being taken. From *With Ammon Wrigley in Saddleworth* by Sam Seville.

Death of a Saddleworth recluse - Particulars of his Life⁵

“We have this week to record the death of “Old Joe RADCLIFFE”, the Saddleworth recluse, who was found dead in his moorland home at Ragstone, near the Denshaw Moors, on Sunday, the 20th of May. The deceased was one of the most peculiar men the district ever produced, and some particulars concerning his chequered career may not be uninteresting to our readers. It seems that on the day named a couple of young men were taking a walk in the outlandish region of

⁵ “The Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter” - Saturday 2nd June 1888.

Ragstone, and on venturing to look through the window of “Old Joe’s” habitation, they saw a sight which combined them that something was wrong. With the exception of two or three panes, the windows were bricked or boarded up, and the door of the dilapidated building was locked. What followed may be best described by a quotation from a letter written by Mr Morgan Brierley, to the City News, of last week. He says - “Under the conceivable circumstances - the young men did not feel justified in breaking into the place alone, so they told my two sons, who happened to be not far away, what they had seen. One of them stayed by the place whilst the other came to inform me, and I advised him to send for a policeman, and, meantime, to go and inform the deceased’s nearest relative, a widow lady far on between fourscore and ninety years of age, yet a most intelligent and active woman, and who lives entirely alone, as did the hermit. She asked my son to act for her, and I accompanied him and the officer to the cot on the moors. He pulled down the boarding from between two short window mullions so that a boy could enter and loosen the door. I was the first to touch the icy forehead (which, however, was not icy, the correct sensation being that of the warmth of life in myself), and feeling the artery in the wrist, I noticed a distinct pulsation, but only one, the last beat of life in the extremities. The body was noticeably warm, but on applying a piece of dry window glass to the mouth and nostrils not a trace of breath could be detected, nor, in applying the hand to that portion of the breast over the heart, could the slightest motion be felt”. The body lay on what purported to be a bed. This consisted merely of a quantity of hay or straw, which lay on the damp floor, and was upheld by a low wall of stones on each side. A rough blanket constituted the only covering. Though well to do, so far as money was concerned, it was thus, that “Old Joe” lived, and died in his rough hermitage.”

“In describing the interior of the house, Mr Brierley says:- “Near by his lair, on the top of a dilapidated box, lay open a volume of sermons, being so kept from the spring in the binding by another book laid upon it. On another box, close by, was a book of homilies, also open, and between the two books an extinguished, not burnt out candle. These books, the sermon, On the Reasonableness of Trust, he must have been reading immediately before he lay down to die, probably on the Saturday evening. We found a small slip of paper, dated May 15, 1888, on which he had written “seriously indisposed for four days”, but on Friday, the 18th, he was seen out of doors and heard shouting (a constant habit with him) as late as four p.m. To apply to a person of this kind Matthew Arnold’s beautiful stanzas “A Wish”, would be a desecration of them, but in the words of Lancashire song, it may be said of him, “he dee’d of hissel”. He had an aversion alike to quacks of the soul and doctors of the body. As his nearest neighbours, the wandering sheep on the moors, when one of them is about to die, it leaves the company of its fellows and retires to some distant and lonely bush in a hollow and there lies down; so did he. As soldiers on the march to the battlefield, he lay on the dry fog, with the exception of his daily attire, his stockings up, and his boots tied. His flannel shirt about his breast was damp with perspiration, but his eyelids were closed, and his features indicated the peaceful departure of life.”

“Not a bit of furniture of any kind had he in the house, not even a stool. A few lidless, empty, old grocery boxes lay about the damp stone floor on which he lay, and two heaps of the poorest, cheapest coal to be got on these hills. In disordered piles on the floor I counted two hundred and sixty volumes of books, mostly of

the so-called religious kind, amongst which were many prayer and hymn books, but few of them bore any traces of ever having been read. The most valuable was a small copy of Baxter's Saint's Best, but it lay at the bottom of the heap, and I don't think the deceased ever read a line of it. On the floor of the upstairs room were laid out sixteen hundred and twenty volumes of books, and two or three barrowfuls of unbound periodicals, all of ancient date, and tied up in bundles. On the floor lay a dozen empty sacks, in which the almost worthless store of rubbishy literature had been packed and carted from Manchester some couple of years ago. The whole lot was obviously the refuse of the poorest second-hand bookstalls in your city."

"Our hermit was born under the star which led Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow, and he was a devout worshipper of the great emperor. "Napoleon", "Ney", "Byron", were chalked in large letters upon the wall of the cot, and an excellent likeness, in gilt frame, of Napoleon in a general's uniform hung just over the place where he lay. A coloured likeness of Garibaldi, the same of some noted American generals, and a book-plate likeness of the great Turenne, were nailed on the ceiling, close under Napoleon's. Printed portraits from periodicals and Christian Herald Almanacs of eminent, divines were fastened to the walls around. He must have been an ardent admirer of Mr Gladstone, for a large printed portrait of him, and another of Mrs Gladstone, were fixed close by the "Napoleon"."

"On the house being searched by Constable Woodward £2 7s 1d was found in a small tin canister and in the chambers upstairs, a further sum of £21 was discovered wrapped in an old napkin, and hid amongst a quantity of hay. A bank book was also found hid in a similar fashion, which showed that he had credit at a Manchester bank of £455. Amongst other articles discovered was an old will made 32 years ago. These things were taken possession of by the police, and the coroner communicated with. Under the circumstances an inquest was deemed unnecessary, and the funeral took place on the following Wednesday."

"The deceased was 75 years of age, and had lived a very temperate, though erratic life. It was his custom at times to rise early and take long walks to Delph, Oldham and other places. In these walks he was very communicative to those who were civil and kind towards him, but it was very rare indeed that he would allow anyone to visit him in his outlandish retreat. It is said that he kept firearms in his possession when at home, and that many a visitor to Ragstones has deemed it was best to beat a hasty retreat when these have been exhibited. In early life Radcliffe had a good education, and his passion for books was great indeed. At one time, when residing at Cherry Clough, he had a very large collection, but owing to his wandering propensities, these were disposed of. He spent no inconsiderable part of his time in France, and was present in Paris all the while that city was besieged by the Germans at the close of the Franco-German war. He was a great admirer of the great Napoleon, and oftentimes, in the course of his walks, he was heard shouting "Napoleon for ever!". His visits to France were somewhat numerous, and would extend over one or two years at a time. On one occasion he brought back with a lot of French dogs, and these he would take with him in all his rambles. In these peregrinations he would marshall the animals in a peculiar way, much to the delight of the young folk and to the amusement to those older in years. He also made several journeys across the Atlantic, and he cherished very favourable opinions of the great Republic. On one occasion after

returning from New York he be-thought him that he had left a debt of sixpence unpaid. On finding this out, he took another passage ticket and went and paid the money. It would be impossible to describe his many eccentricities. He was an old freeholder, and had plenty of money to go at, yet his needs were very few indeed. He was not exactly a miser, for as we have said before, he spent money freely in buying books and travelling about. He was well acquainted with most of the standard works, and could converse freely concerning the lives of many great writers. In the latter part of his life he devoted himself principally to works of theology, and was a great admirer of Spurgeon, Talmage, and other leading preachers. The deceased visited Delph so late as Friday, May 18th, and as usual, visited the stationer's shop kept by Mr Moorhouse. He then appeared in his usual health, and few would have contemplated that his end was so near. A few days previous to his last visit, he had bought a shilling copy of Lord Byron's poems, and finding that the edition was now a complete one, he vowed that the published ought to be hanged. He recited freely "Childe Harold's farewell to England", and seemed to have a knowledge of almost every poem that Byron wrote. He had also a thorough knowledge of the details of Byron's life. On making one of these visits recently, he said in a confidential mood "I have been a great reader of all the poets and other great writers. I've studied French, Latin and Greek, but now that I am getting old, I must put these things aside and confine myself to religious matters". He was generally quiet and unassuming in his character, but on extraordinary occasions, when severely annoyed he could curse like a trooper. The familiar figure of "Old Joe" will be missed in many a quarter, and it will be a long time before the singular freaks and sayings of the "Denshaw Recluse" are forgotten."



Joe o'th Ragstone's gravestone in Denshaw Churchyard

The Saddleworth Hermit - to the Editor of the Reporter.⁶

“Sir - Please allow me a small space in your paper which I may devote to the respectful memory of the late Joe RADCLIFFE, of Ragstone. Mr Morgan Brierley has written quite a readable dissertation on his death, but the tone of disparagement which runs through it grates most disagreeably on my feelings, and as it is not merited, I beg in the mildest of ways to resent it. His physiology, his natural history, and his philosophy may be very good, but his biography is, in my eyes atrocious. Diogenes was a philosopher, and is respected though he dwelt in a tub. Why should Joe RADCLIFFE be disparaged for dwelling in an empty stone house? Joe was an old time friend of mine, and I am proud to say so. Had Mr Brierley known him as long and as well as I have know him, he never would have written of him as he now has written. Mr Brierley sneers about poor Joe’s reading, and about his knowledge of Latin, Greek and a “little” French, are to me most absurd and unjust. Why, thirty five years ago he translated a whole volume of French into English for me and a brother-in-law of mine, who were accustomed to visit him. His knowledge of a “little” French at that time enabled him to read right forward without more need of a dictionary than he would have had if he had been reading English. To us he was a living dictionary, and because of this, and the delight we had in conversing with him on history and general literature, our visits were many. He had read Lord Bacon’s “Novum Organum”, in Latin and deep philosophy of Bacon’s essays, he had at least well in memory. No choice bit could identify it, and very often he could repeat it. He had read Bourienne, Las Casas and other French biographers and writers on Napoleon, until certainly he had imbibed their spirit and enthusiasm for the hero.”

“If Mr Brierley never heard Joe relate the ever soul-stirring story of the little Corsican’s career, he missed a great treat. Joe could tell of every successful battle and of many of the great French generals there. Of Antserlitz and Jena he never tired of talking; Napoleon was a genius, a hero, a more able commander than Alexander. Although his retreat from Moscow was disastrous, he was still a hero. He conquered all but nature and fate. Leipsig and Waterloo notwithstanding, Joe had read in French the enthusiastic eulogies of the French literati on the great commander until when he thought of him scaling the Alps, forcing the bridge of Lodi, capturing kings, giving them back their freedom, and dictating the code Napoleon, what wonder if he shouted in delight and exclaimed “Vive Napoleon !”.

“I must say a word with respect to Joe’s usefulness to the world. When he inherited Ragstone Farm, it was little better than walled in heath or common land. He has often related to me with delight the years he toiled on that farm, grubbing up the stones and distributing the meagre soil; mixing up his delight in literature with healthy and useful labour. If that man deserves well of his country who makes two blades of grass grow where only one previously grew, then should Joe now be held in respect. Aye, and notwithstanding his personal neglect of himself, which I found it useless to object to, I do respect him for his cultivated taste, and I shall always think of him with thankfulness, for the generous way in which he placed himself at my service. My fellow pupil, alas has been laid in the white

⁶ “The Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter” - Saturday 9th June 1888.

man's grave at Sierra Leone these twenty years. Had he been here now, I would not have needed to write a good word about Joe. In that furnitureless cottage Joe enkindled in him such an enthusiastic love of language that very soon he could read Latin, and when he died he could read and speak French, Italian, Spanish and German."

"He had acted as interpreter between Spanish and French officers at Tatan in Morocco, during the Spanish war there. Had circumstances been more favourable, Joe could have made more such pupils."

"Much could be said for Joe about his habits and his cursing, but I don't defend him in these. No one seems to know now about the notorious Buckstone's gang of robbers. The stories of them, however, had made lasting impressions on his mind, and he told me that, as he had nothing to show, he was prepared for such midnight depredators. His windows had been smashed by young men, neighbours who had gone in gangs to do it. He said they were heathen, and could not read but he would not renew them for their delectation."

"Joe went to America to pay a small debt which he could have evaded, and now I testify to the abiding delight he ever had afterwards in knowing he never wronged any mortal, and he endured wrong without resentment, saying quietly sometimes, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord". He was long the daily scoffing of men less worthy than himself. Peaceful be his repose. His memory I fondly cherish. Yours truly - David MALLALIEU - Delph, June 7th 1888."

In his account of Lurden and Joe o'th Ragstones in 1912 Ammon Wrigley recounts of Joe: "On returning to his solitary old farm from wandering abroad, he used to make the cloughs ring with the names of his heroes. Bad weather never kept Joe o'th Ragstones in the house, and on stormy days his battered old figure might have been seen roaming the moors looking more like a bit of rag blown about by the wind, or a weird unearthly apparition of the moors, than a living human being. Now lost in driving mist, now seen again for a moment on a black ridge, waving his arms and shouting "Napolean for ever! Massena for ever; the spoilt child of victory for ever!" In his roamings he was generally accompanied by several dogs, which were sometimes fastened to a belt round his waist. At other times he would allow them to run loose, then he took great delight in making them advance, retreat and wheel about like a company of soldiers. Perhaps he imagined himself Massena handling infantry. His dogs were invariably named after famous Frenchmen. One of his last favourites was a little wire-haired mongrel called "Voltaire" which, in his way, was almost as intractable as the celebrated cynic himself. On one occasion he decided to take his favourite to the funeral of a Radcliffe, at Heights Chapel, but Voltaire had no desire to see a Churistian interment, and vigourously barked his objections; at last they set out together over the moor, on the top of Hind Hill the dog lay down in the grass and refused to go any further. Old Joe stormed and Voltaire barked and still lay in the grass. After wasting a deal of time in arguing the matter he picked the dog up and carried it in his arms all the way to Heights. When he got there he found, to his great annoyance, that the last rites were over, and consequently Voltaire could not take part in a Christian burial service."⁷

⁷ Ammon Wrigley. "Lurden and Joe o'th Ragstones" in *Songs of a Moorland Parish*, Saddleworth, 1912, pp 59-65.

Sam Seville, Ammon Wrigley's son-in-law also relates:- "Around 1930, I met an old gentleman who could remember Joe standing in front of Denshaw Post Office, three or four dogs tethered to his old ragged overcoat with string tied through the buttonholes. I was told how Joe would speak freely to anyone who would accept his appearance and betrayed no signs of shock. At the time of his death, and for a number of years before, his house did not contain any furniture and he greatly disliked to admit visitors for this reason"⁸.

Ammon Wrigleys sums up Joe's final years: "A little, frail looking man, he must have been, constitutionally, made of iron, for how he contrived to live through the the long, terrible winters which grip that high, bleak mooredge is a grim mystery. We, who sit round warm hearths and sleep in warm comfortable beds, cannot imagine how Old Joe passed the stormy nights when wind and sleet were beating through his worn, neglected homestead. Yet he weathered through it all, knowing nothing of doctor's medicine, and living until he was seventy- five years of age."⁹

Joe of Ragstones is buried in Denshaw Churchyard in a grave to the north-west of the church. It simply records "In Loving Memory of Joseph Radcliffe of Ragstone who died May 20th 1888."

⁸ Sam Seville. With Ammon Wrigley in Saddleworth, Saddleworth Historical Society, 1984, pp 11-13.

⁹ Ammon Wrigley. op cit.

EARLY SADDLEWORTH RECORDS - 5

The Lay Subsidy of 1297

Victor Khadem

A number of the local assessments for the subsidy of a ninth of 1297 have survived amongst the Exchequer records in the National Archives. In Yorkshire, the assessments for the liberty of Ripon and the wapentakes of Ewcross, Strafford and Agbrigg have survived. As a township in Agbrigg, the assessment for Quick did survive and it was published by the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in 1894 under the editorship of William Brown.¹ Unfortunately, at some time subsequent to this, the first membrane of the Agbrigg roll which contained the Quick assessment was lost. It is therefore Brown's transcript that is printed below along with a translation and supplementary table.

The assessment undoubtedly adds significantly to our knowledge of Saddleworth in the late thirteenth century. However, local tax assessments of this period are notoriously deceptive and difficult to interpret.² Therefore this introduction aims to set the subsidy in its political context and to detail the mechanisms for its collection. It will then analyse the structure and content of the Quick entry and offer some preliminary comparisons with the rest of Agbrigg. Using contemporary Saddleworth documents, it will look at the Quick assessment in the context of evasion and then glean what is possible of the individuals who are assessed. Finally, some observations will be made on the editorial principles applied by Brown when making his transcript.

I

On 22nd August 1297, Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk and Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford along with 'many others, Bannerets and Bachelors' appeared at the bar of the Exchequer to formally protest against the levy of a tax of an eighth on all moveable goods across the realm.³ They argued that the tax had been granted to King Edward I not by shire and borough representatives in parliament as was beginning to be customary in the 1290s, but by men loyal to him – 'from the people standing around in his chamber' according to one chronicler.⁴ Such open defiance was a symptom of the constitutional and political problems Edward faced in the mid-1290s. Unpopular and costly wars in Gascony and Flanders for which feudal service was demanded meant Edward faced opposition amongst the baronial and knightly classes,

¹ Quick was the alternative name for Saddleworth and used especially when referring to the township rather than parish. W. Brown (Ed.), *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy, Being a Ninth Collected in 25 Edward I.*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, Vol. 16 (1894).

² For a survey of early lay subsidies see J.F. Hadwin, 'The Medieval Lay Subsidies and Economic History', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 36, No. 2. A useful interpretation of a local assessment can be found in, A.T. Gaydon, *The Taxation of 1297*, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Vol. 39 (Streatley, 1959).

³ 'Extracts from the Memoranda Rolls (L.T.R.) of the Exchequer', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, New Series, Vol. 3 (1886), pp. 284-5.

⁴ Quoted in M. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972), p. 252

whilst an increasing burden of taxation galvanised dissatisfaction amongst the population at large.

Lay subsidies, whereby a percentage of an individual's moveable goods were taxed at a set rate, were not a novel concept in 1297. They had been implemented sporadically since the Saladin Tithe of 1188, but from 1294 they were levied annually. It was this unusual frequency of lay subsidies and other 'diverse tallages and diverse prises', coupled with the lack of assent from the community which led to the opposition of Bigod and Bohun.⁵ Early in August 1297 they had drafted the *Monstraunces* which accused Edward of failing to maintain the customary liberties of the realm as well as those liberties propounded by Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest. Furthermore they argued that he had exacted unfair taxes reducing them to 'poverty'.⁶ Despite instructing the Deputy Treasurer and the Barons of the Exchequer to 'leav[e] nothing undone for proceeding with the taxing and levying of the Eighth', the demands of the recalcitrant earls had to be substantially met in order to proceed with the collection of the much needed taxation.⁷ To this end, Prince Edward, the king's son and his lieutenant in England issued the *Confirmatio Cartarum* on 10th October 1297, in which he conceded to observe Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest. In addition, the contentious subsidy of an eighth was dropped, with parliament granting a reduced subsidy of a ninth, the chief taxers for which were appointed on the 14th October.⁸ Although the subsidy was granted by common consent, in a fashion that was acceptable to the earls, there was still not much appetite to contribute from the population at large.

II

It is worth detailing the method of the assessment and collection for the subsidy because it was a local one, with relatively little central oversight. This meant there was variation in practice between wapentakes and even vills, as well as greater scope for evasion. Responsibility for each county was vested in two chief taxers appointed by the Exchequer. Uniquely in 1297, the sheriff was named alongside the chief-taxers, partly to facilitate greater administrative efficiency, but partly to quell foreseen opposition in the shires.⁹ The chief-taxers selected sub-taxers in each vill. Although it was officially specified that each vill should have either two or four sub-taxers, in reality the number varied depending on the size of the vill – in Kilham, Yorkshire, there were eight.¹⁰ Their responsibility lay in assessing the moveables of each household, initially deciding whether an individual's goods exceeded the threshold, which in 1297 was set at 9s.. For those who were to be taxed, a detailed record of every taxable item they held as of Michaelmas Day was made. A clerk would then draw up two copies of this local assessment: one, with the seals of the sub-taxers attached, was deposited with the chief taxers, whilst the other, with the seals of the chief-taxers attached, was kept by the sub-taxers and used as the basis of the

⁵ For a full list of taxes exacted from 1294-7, see J.G. Edwards, 'Confirmatio Cartarum and Baronial Grievances in 1297', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 58, No. 230 (April 1930), pp. 158-9.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 148-54.

⁷ 'Extracts from the Memoranda Rolls', pp. 286-7

⁸ Gaydon, *The Taxation of 1297*, p. x

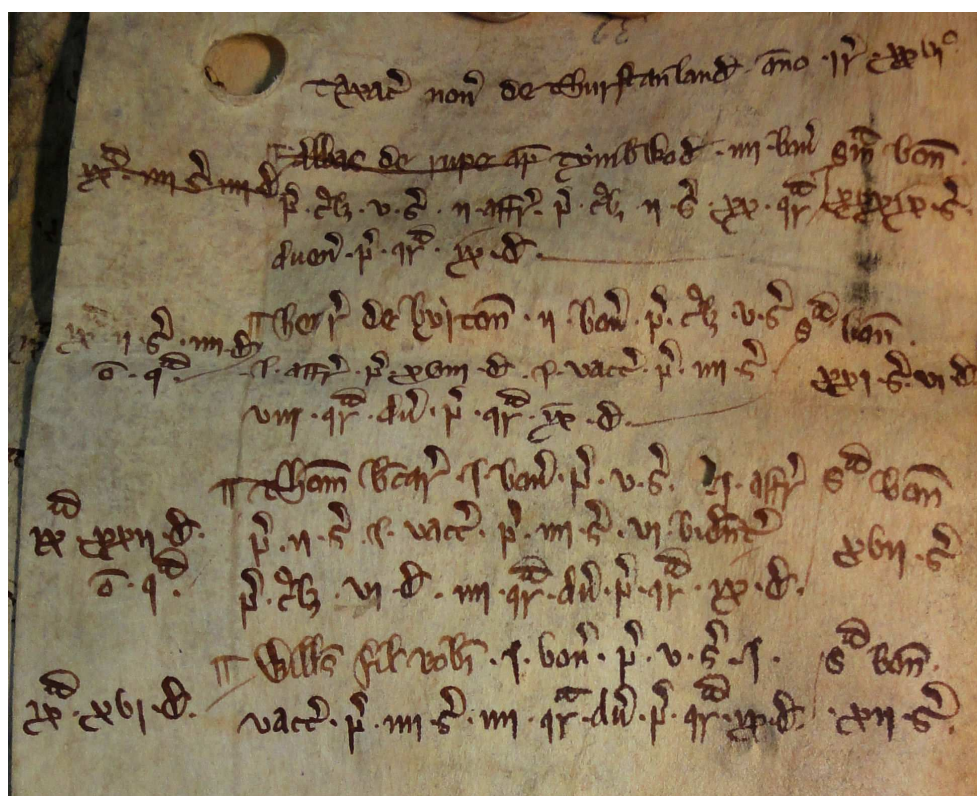
⁹ *ibid.*; J.F. Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes on Personal Property, 1290 to 1334: A Study in Medieval English Financial Administration* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), p. 43

¹⁰ Brown, *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy*, p. 143

collection of the levy. When the money had been received by the chief-taxers, their clerks compiled the county roll, which was less detailed than the local assessments, containing only the names of those taxed in each vill and the amount of tax each paid. It was this roll that was sent to the Exchequer. Once officials in the Exchequer had accounted for the money received, they only recorded the total money paid by each wapentake on the pipe rolls. Where the Exchequer disputed the accuracy of the returns made by the chief-taxers, investigations were held which often required the local assessments held by the chief-taxers as evidence. In all likelihood, it is for this reason, and therefore in the context of inaccuracy, that the local assessments for the wapentake of Agbrigg have survived in the Exchequer records.

III

It is clear that the Agbrigg roll contains the original assessments produced by the sub-taxers, rather than later copies made by clerks of the Exchequer. Each of the thirty-nine membranes represents a single vill. There are significant differences in the parchment size, palaeographical style and the layout of each entry. Unfortunately, none of the seals, nor seal tags have survived.¹¹



The 1297 Lay Subsidy Assessment for Thurstonland [TNA, E 179/206/7 m32.]

Aside from their physical differences, an indicator of each membrane's local production is the variation of phraseology found between the assessments. Quick is particularly notable in this respect - not only does it possess a number of differences

¹¹ The National Archives (TNA), E 179/206/7.

to the standard words and phrases found in all the other Agbrigg villis, but there are also internal inconsistencies, possibly implying the hand of two different clerks.¹² The majority of membranes bear a heading, though there are considerable differences in wording between townships. The heading 'Willa [presumably Brown's mistranscription of 'Villa'] de Quick' is similar to two other Agbrigg villis, Huddersfield and Walton. At the bottom of each membrane the total sum of a vill's tax-charge is given and in many cases the total sum of all the goods in each vill is recorded. In the Quick transcript this is entirely missing.

Stylistically there are two distinct sections in the Quick assessment – the first relates to the first seven entries, and the second, to the last four. In the first section, the phrase 'precium quilibet' is used, whilst in the last four, this changes to 'precium cujuslibet'. Throughout the whole of Agbrigg, the word 'quilibet' only appears in the Quick assessment. Furthermore, only in the second section is each taxable good introduced by the word 'Item'. Another internal inconsistency, though one which is in both the first and second sections, is that the calculated total tax-charge of a ninth is only given for Richard de Hasilgref and Roger de Holingreave. The remaining entries only contain the sum of the individuals' total goods. This is unlike every other Agbrigg township, where both totals are recorded against each individual's name.

IV

As the items valued in Quick clearly demonstrate, not all moveable goods were assessed. Willard has argued that in rural districts only larger beasts, grains, peas and some beans were ever accounted for.¹³ Formally, only two ends of the social spectrum were exempted from the ninth: knights and their wives' armour, riding-horses, jewels, clothing and vessels of gold, silver and brass were spared as were those with less than 9s. of goods.¹⁴ Although there were no formal exemptions for the large numbers who did not fall into either of these categories, Willard has suggested that clauses in Magna Carta and exemptions made in earlier lay subsidies meant that by 1297 it was customary not to tax any goods which would lead to disabling a man from carrying out his livelihood.¹⁵ In practice this meant that food, household goods, husbandry gear, huslement and poultry were not assessed or taxed. Indeed, in the whole of Yorkshire, carts only appear in three villis all of which are in the vicinity of Ripon, their appearance surely owing to the zeal of the local sub-taxers rather than a chronic shortage of carts across the county.¹⁶

Using an exemption found in the 1283 Lay Subsidy which stated that 'all kinds of food provided and ready for use' were not to be taxed, Willard argues that grain that was intended for family consumption was not assessed.¹⁷ Evidence from the West Riding goes some way to supporting this contention. Because the assessment was carried soon after the harvest, (it should have been executed on Michaelmas Day, though in Agbrigg nothing was done until November 20th at the earliest), the

¹² The following comparisons are made on the basis of Brown's transcript of Agbrigg Wapentake, Brown, *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy*, pp. 89-115

¹³ Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes*, pp. 79-80

¹⁴ Gaydon, *The Taxation of 1297*, p. xvii

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Brown, *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy*, p. xxiii.

¹⁷ Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes*, pp. 81-2.

assessments should reflect almost a year's worth of grain.¹⁸ A manorial servant at the end of the thirteenth century could expect to receive between 35 and 40 bushels of grain per annum and some ploughmen in southern England in 1296-7 received over 50 bushels as well as a cash wage.¹⁹ Yet the average supply of grain in villis in the West Riding range from 24 to 70.5 bushels and considering that many of those assessed were of a higher social status than manorial labourers, these figures do seem low.²⁰ In Quick the average was 36 bushels with Richard de Hasilgreave and Robert Pecher the only individuals possessing significantly more than the average labourer's allowance of grain, with 97 and 64 bushels respectively.²¹ In contrast, four of the ten individuals had none. This distribution of grain in the district cannot have been sustainable and it therefore seems most likely that the figures only represent that grain which was destined for the market.

V

The goods that are assessed show a clear agricultural emphasis on cattle, with few sheep mentioned, a pattern that is reflected in adjoining townships. Indeed, on a national basis, although sheep are recorded as being more numerous in some districts, the numbers assessed cannot have credibly supported the substantial wool exports of the later thirteenth century.²² An explanation for their low numbers in Saddleworth could lie in the fact that it was a private chase. The land was given over to hunting - the beasts of the chase were prioritised as much as, if not more than agriculture. Under Forest Law, sheep were prevented from pasturing in the forest except by special license, primarily due to the fact that they undercut the vert to the detriment of the deer.²³ Because Forest Law was usually applied only to royal forests, it is unlikely that Saddleworth was subject to it, however, the principle would have been recognised by the manorial lords, and they may well have discouraged large flocks for this reason.

The predominance of cattle in Saddleworth is consistent with comparable Pennine districts such as Marsden and Rossendale, where the lords, the de Lacys, earls of Lincoln, combined the preservation of good hunting land with the establishment of vaccaries, large cattle farms where oxen and cows could be pastured and bred.²⁴ The fact that the abbot of Roche paid a wage to the 'cowherd of the grange' in Hilbrighthope in 1268-9 indicates that this was the primary agricultural activity in Saddleworth.²⁵ The abbey clearly saw Saddleworth was a favourable district to pasture cattle, for the numbers in Hilbrighthope in 1297 exceed their other two

¹⁸ Brown, *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy*, p. xvii

¹⁹ Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes*, p. 83 and R.H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000-1500* (The University Press, Cambridge, 1993), pp. 106-7.

²⁰ Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes*, p. 81.

²¹ Almost without exception 1 quart is equal to 8 bushels. The figures for Quick given here and in Section VI exclude the grange at Ildbricthop (Hilbrighthope) because it was a monastic holding and, as is discussed on p. 113 below, was not meant to be taxed as part of this lay subsidy.

²² J.F. Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes*, p. 73.

²³ J. Manwood (Ed. W. Nelson), *Treatise of Forest Laws* (London, 1717), pp. 93-4

²⁴ G.H. Tupling, *The Economic History of Rossendale*, Chetham Society, New Series, Vol. 86 (Manchester, 1927), pp. 17-27.

²⁵ JUST 1/1051, m. 9d., TNA. All records at TNA prefixed by the letters 'JUST', 'KB' or 'CP' can be found online at <http://allt.law.uh.edu>

granges at Armthorpe and Thurstonland.²⁶ In his analysis of the ninth of 1297 in Bedfordshire, Gaydon has argued that oxen were ‘almost a mark of status’, with only manorial lords stocking large numbers of them, men of lower social status tending to employ the affer for draught purposes. In Saddleworth, they are more evenly distributed. However, Gilbert de Quick owned four, the same number as manorial lords such as William fil William in Emley and John Tyas in Slaithwaite. It should be noted however, that although the numbers of cows and oxen are relatively large in Quick, they are small when compared to the numbers pastured on vaccaries in Rossendale. Henry de Lacy’s accounts of 1296-7 reveal that it was not unusual for a cowkeeper there to be responsible for as many as 80 head of cattle.²⁷

VI

Initially, the township of Quick seems to be striking insofar as it is one of only four townships in the whole wapentake where ten or more individuals are assessed. In addition, with total goods amounting to £9 1s., it has the third highest value assessment of all the Agbrigg townships. However, drawing conclusions about the relative economic status or population of Quick in relation to Agbrigg is fraught with difficulty, owing to the inherent unreliability of the local assessments.

Firstly, the valuations of individual taxable items are not precise because they are based on a standardised rate, taking no account, for example, of the age of the beast or the quality of the grain. On the whole, the rate of assessment seems to have been set at the lowest feasible price.²⁸ In 1296-7, oxen sold on behalf of Henry de Lacy in Rossendale achieved more than double the prices oxen were assessed at in the subsidy.²⁹ Thus, where there are only small differences in valuations between individuals and townships meaningful comparisons are difficult to make.

Secondly, the question of evasion is important. This is particularly the case in relation to the Quick assessment because what appears to be its relative wealth compared to other townships is due to the larger number of individuals assessed, rather than the higher value of assessments – the mean assessment of individuals in Quick, which is just over 18s., is comparable to those of neighbouring townships of Thurstonland and Meltham, and quite considerably smaller than in Emley (25s. 2d.) and Slaithwaite (27s.).

The preceding years of burdensome taxation as well as the heated political context in which the subsidy was granted clearly had an impact on the revenue raised. A greater number of local assessments found their way into the Exchequer in 1297 compared to other years, implying that their accuracy was contested by officials and it is notable that despite the ninth being the highest rate of subsidy levied during Edward’s reign, it raised the lowest sum of any subsidy granted to the king, including that of the lowest rate, a thirtieth and twentieth, in 1306.³⁰ Because of the very local process of assessment and collection, the sub-taxers do seem to have exercised a large amount of discretion with regards to who was assessed and the extent to which they were taxed. Willard has shown that in some areas thresholds above the stated minimum

²⁶ Brown, *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy*, pp.66, 108.

²⁷ Tupling, *The Economic History of Rossendale*, p. 22.

²⁸ Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes*, pp. 138-41

²⁹ Tupling, *The Economic History of Rossendale*, p. 25n.

³⁰ Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, p. 179.

seem to have been imposed by the sub-taxers so as to relieve those who only just qualified for taxation from paying – such a policy may have been implemented in Agbrigg townships such as Slaithwaite where only two wealthy individuals were taxed. Furthermore, that sub-taxers were susceptible to bribery is illustrated by the case of the Oxfordshire township of Cuxham, where, after what must have been rather impressive entertainment provided for the sub-taxers, the tax paid by the township was reduced from £60 11s. 9d. in 1294, to £12 8s. the next year.³¹

Without an intimate knowledge of the contemporary history of neighbouring districts it is difficult to say with any certainty that there was evasion, but in Saddleworth, the small number of documents that do survive for the turn of the fourteenth century point to the fact that a number of relatively wealthy individuals did not contribute. Richard de Staveley is not recorded. He was perhaps the most important man in Saddleworth, holding nearly 1,500 acres of enclosed and unenclosed land in what became known as Shawmere.³² In 1303, he claimed that a group of six Lancashire men stole goods and chattels from his house at 'Queke' to the value of £20.³³ Although much of this may have been in exempt items such as clothes and plate, it still seems inconceivable that he would not have possessed taxable goods amounting to 9s.

In Quickmere there were many more members of the de Quick family than the two mentioned on the assessment, most notably Robert son of Adam de Quick who sold the substantial Grasscroft estate to Simon de Bradshaw in 1303 for £20.³⁴ The de Grottons, another Quickmere family, are unrepresented in the subsidy. The most prominent member of the family, Robert, was first recorded in 1293.³⁵ He witnessed deeds of the Platt family of Withington, Lancashire, as well as well as many local ones, and appears to be the same Robert de Grotton who by the early fourteenth century held lands elsewhere in Agbrigg wapentake as well as in Lancashire by virtue of his marriage to Agnes de Townley.³⁶

Out of the ten witnesses (all of whom have Saddleworth names) who appear on two extant deeds for Saddleworth dating from 1293 and c. 1300 only one individual assessed in 1297, Gilbert le Fraunsays, appears as a witness.³⁷ Notably, he is the last named witness, implying he was socially (and, in all likelihood, economically) inferior to those who preceded him. Some of these men may have served as sub-taxers, in which case their goods would have been assessed by the chief taxers and therefore not appeared on the roll with the rest of the assessments. Nonetheless, for a

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 180.

³² This statute measure. Taken from the First Edition, Six Inch Ordnance Survey Map, 1854 in Buckley, Harrison & Petford, *Mapping Saddleworth*, Volume I (Uppermill, 2007).

³³ KB 27/173, m. 26d., TNA.

³⁴ M. Roper (Ed.), *Feet of Fines for the County of York from 1300 to 1314*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 1965, Vol. 127, pp. 44-5.

³⁵ OD/WBD/X/63, Beaumont of Whitley Collection, West Yorkshire Archive Service (Kirklees).

³⁶ J. Booker, A History of the Ancient Chapel of Birch, in Manchester Parish, Chetham Society, Vol. 47 (Manchester, 1859), p. 193, M. Roper and C. Kitching (Eds.), *Feet of Fines for the County of York from 1314 to 1326*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, Vol. 58, (2006, for the year 2004) and W. Farrer and J. Brownbill (Eds.), *A History of the County of Lancaster*, Vol. 7, (Victoria County History, 1912), pp. 320-4.

³⁷ Le Fraunsays appears in the deed of 1293: OD/WBD/X/63, Beaumont of Whitley Collection, West Yorkshire Archive Service (Kirklees). For the deed of c. 1300 see DDL 569, Lancashire Record Office (LRO).

township the size of Quick, it is unlikely there would have been more than four sub-taxers, meaning there appears to be a significant number, who must have had moveables above the 9s. threshold, who were not taxed.

VII

A number of those taxed are referred to in contemporary Saddleworth documents. Gilbert de Quick, the joint wealthiest individual in the township, in all probability lived at a tenement in Quick. He may have been the Gilbert son of Robert de Quick who appeared with Robert son of Gilbert de Quick (presumably his father) as plaintiff in a plea of *mort d'ancestor* against Robert son of Richard de Quick in 1289-90.³⁸ In 1303 he was one of five men charged with using force of arms to drive Thomas de Assheton from Palden to Quick.³⁹ The last known reference to him is in 1309 when he is recorded in a plea of *mort d'ancestor* against Robert son of Adam de Quick.⁴⁰

Clearly, there were many landholding de Quicks active at the turn of the century, though this is the only reference to Euota, or possibly Enota, who seems to be a female member of the family. To have been liable for tax she would either have been a spinster, or, more likely, a widow.

Jowanus de Scheldlau is most probably Jordan de Shelderslow, the origin of whose surname is a settlement in Quickmere. He was named alongside Gilbert de Quick in the case brought by Thomas de Assheton.⁴¹ Like the Quicks, there were several members of the Shelderslow family recorded towards the end of the thirteenth century.⁴²

William de Quotil is more difficult to identify; Quotil does not correspond to any known local place. Because 'Q's and 'W's were often interchangeable when written at this period it could be intended to read 'Whitehill'. Alternatively the 'Q' could have been a misreading of 'C' or 'K' in which case Quotil could represent Knothill. This would not be without precedent, for a Gylle de Knotthille rented property in Shawmere in 1401.⁴³

It is difficult not to associate Adam de la Lyed with Lydgate. The present Church Farm, which dates back to at least to the sixteenth century may well have been the original settlement there.⁴⁴

Richard de Hasilgref shares the surname of the Haslegreave family who were associated with Knarr in Shawmere from the early seventeenth century.⁴⁵ The earliest member of the family associated with Saddleworth is a Bartyn Hesilgreve, mentioned

³⁸ JUST 1/1288, TNA.

³⁹ CP 40/146 m. 39d., TNA.

⁴⁰ JUST 1/1113 m. 8, TNA.

⁴¹ CP 40/146 m. 39d., TNA.

⁴² JUST 1/1101, m. 21 & 21d., TNA.

⁴³ Manor of Shagh Court Roll, 1401, DD/FJ/16/6/20, Foljambe of Osberton Collection, Nottinghamshire County Archives.

⁴⁴ The fields numbered 38g, 152g, 152h and 153 on the map of James Farrer of 1770 seems to broadly correspond with the medieval estate at Lydgate. M. Buckley, D. Harrison et al, *Mapping Saddleworth Volume II*, (Upplermill, 2010), p. 70.

⁴⁵ Will of Bryan Haselgreaffe of Knarr, Husbandman, 1618, WCW Supra 1618, LRO.

in the 1545 lay subsidy.⁴⁶ Without further evidence it is impossible to say whether he was descended of the Richard mentioned in 1297. The fact that no Hasslegreave is mentioned in a rental of Shawmere in 1401 implies that they hadn't settled at Knarr by this point, and their absence from medieval records more generally, does cast some doubt on their continuity of settlement in Saddleworth.

Nicholas de Bradfordmedius (Bradfordmeadows) derives his surname from a local place-name, though one which had fallen out of use by the end of the medieval period. The Bradfordmeadows lay in the northern part of Shawmere, covering most of the estate centred on Tamewater, which is presumably where Nicholas either lived or originated.⁴⁷

Although A.J. Howcroft suggested Gilbert le Fraunsays could have been associated with the settlement at Frenches, this can be discounted.⁴⁸ In the sixteenth century, the Mallalieu family, supposed Huguenots, were settled there and the fact that the patriarch of the family was known as 'Thomas Marralew alias French' makes any link between Gilbert le Fraunsays most unlikely.⁴⁹ The fact that the name is 'le Fraunsays' and not "de Fraunsays" also suggests the name is a description of a Frenchman, a derivation supported by Redmonds.⁵⁰ The surname was common across the country at this period, with fifteen individuals recorded bearing the surname in Yorkshire in the 1297 lay subsidy. It should be borne in mind that the name did not necessarily imply Gilbert was a Frenchman by blood, but could simply be used to indicate some other close connection with the country. The only other extant reference to Gilbert is as a witness to a Saddleworth deed of the Staveleys in 1293.⁵¹

The name of Robert Pecher is difficult to identify, though Redmonds has shown that there were 'Pegeres' living at Thornes near Wakefield in the later thirteenth century.⁵²

Again, Roger de Holyngref's name is a local one, originating at Hollingreave, or Holly Grove, as it is now known. In the late thirteenth century a number of men using the surname were active in Saddleworth. There appear to have been two generations named Roger, one mentioned in 1268-9 and another who rented a messuage and land on the manor of Saddleworth in 1322.⁵³ As late as 1343, a Roger de Holyngreve witnessed a Saddleworth deed.⁵⁴

The 'grange of Ildbrictop' relates to the estate farmed directly by Roche Abbey in Hilbrighthope (later known as Friarmere). Hilbrighthope had been granted to the monastery in c. 1245, though they may have held a part of the estate rather earlier

⁴⁶ *Yorkshire Lay Subsidies*, Thoresby Society, Vol. 11, p. 350

⁴⁷ Robert de Stapleton granted the Bradfordmeadows to Richard de Staveley in c.1250, Special Collections MS [Deposits] 1946/1/Box 4, Wentworth of Woolley Papers, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

⁴⁸ A.J. Howcroft, *Chapelry and Church of Saddleworth* (Oldham, 1915), p. 103

⁴⁹ Inventory of James Kenworthe of Sadleworthe, 1588, WCW Supra 1588, LRO.

⁵⁰ G. Redmonds, *Huddersfield & District*, Yorkshire Surnames Series Part II (1992), p. 22.

⁵¹ OD/WBD/X/63, Beaumont of Whitley Collection, West Yorkshire Archive Service (Kirklees).

⁵² Redmonds, *Huddersfield & District*, p. 45.

⁵³ JUST 1/1051 m. 9d., TNA; SC 6/1146/18, TNA.

⁵⁴ DDL 537, LRO.

than this.⁵⁵ Because the ninth was a *lay* subsidy, both the spiritualities and temporalities of the clergy were exempt. In 1297, sub-taxers across the country seem to have been in confusion as to whether the clergy were liable to pay the subsidy because of the turbulent nature of church-state relations in the previous year. Archbishop Winchelsey had used Pope Boniface VIII's bull *Clericis Laicos*, to refuse granting the king any clerical taxation. In response, Edward directed the church's lay fees to be seized and that the clergy be taken out of his protection. As such, in 1296 church property was liable to taxation, however, by 1297 church and state were reconciled, meaning that when parliament granted the ninth in October, the clergy agreed a separate clerical subsidy.⁵⁶

The sub-taxers were not fully aware of these developments and in the extant Yorkshire lay subsidy assessments the abbot of Roche was also taxed for his estate at Timberwood in Thurstonland and at Armethorpe in the wapentake of Strafford. Across the country, monastic entries were crossed out in a contemporary hand, and in his transcript, Brown indicates that this was the case for Roche Abbey's two other Yorkshire estates, but not for Hilbrighthope. Nevertheless, in his Introduction, he states that 'In the West Riding portion of the volume the returns relating to religious houses are always crossed out', which confirms the national evidence, clearly showing that the grange was not liable to pay the ninth.⁵⁷

VIII

Because only Brown's transcript is extant, and because he cautioned his reader that the Quick membrane had 'been very much rubbed' and that it 'is consequently quite possible that some of the entries have been incorrectly deciphered' it is necessary to examine the editorial principles he employed so as to better understand what exactly the original membrane contained. Unfortunately his Introduction doesn't specify how he edited the assessments – to elucidate this, a comparison between the extant originals and Brown's transcript has to be made.

Two major forms of standardisation have evidently been employed by Brown. Firstly, Latin words and names have been fully expanded. Thus, in the Lepton roll, 'Joh's de beumo't' becomes 'Johannes de Beumont'. Although, it is usual practice to expand Latin words, expanding personal names, particularly ones which are unusual or unfamiliar, can result in misinterpretation – it is certainly worth bearing this in mind when using the Quick assessment, especially with the names which are not easily identifiable. Secondly, Brown standardised the punctuation. In the originals there are small dots between words, letters and numbers but they are distributed in a fairly haphazard fashion and do not seem to convey the same punctuation as is used by Brown.

Brown made significant additions in his transcript thorough the use of both square brackets and brackets in parenthesis. The square brackets are his additions, being inserted to fill in words that are entirely missing. For example, in Horbury, the word 'precium' has been missed in the original – to maintain an element of consistency in

⁵⁵ CP 40/195a m. 146d., TNA; H.C. Maxwell Lyte (Ed.) *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, Vol. 1 (London, 1903), p. 146-7.

⁵⁶ For a detailed account of Edward's dispute with the clergy see H. Rothwell, 'The Confirmation of the Carters, 1297, I', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 60, No. 236 (January 1945).

⁵⁷ Brown, *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy*, p. xii n.

his transcript, Brown added this in. What he meant by the words in parenthesis is less clear. The only other instance of their use outside the Quick assessment is in the Lepton transcript where the total sum of goods in the township is stated as being '(xc) vijs jd.' In the original only the 'c' is shown – why Brown didn't use square brackets to insert the 'x' is difficult to explain. Thus, there appears to be a degree of inconsistency in Brown's approach which means that a degree of caution needs to be exercised when using the transcript.

1297 Lay Subsidy Assessment for Quick⁵⁸

Willa de Quayk.

Gilbertus de la Quayk bovem, precium vs; et unam vaccam, preciums; et unum equum, precium; et vij quart. avene, precium quelibet quartd. Summa omnium bonorum, xxxijsd.

Euota de la Quayk habet ij vaccas, precium quilibets; et x capros, precium quilibet vjd; et Summa omnium bonorum, xiijs vjd.

Jowanas de Scheldlau habet unum bovem, precium vs; et unam vaccam, precium iijs, et vitulum, precium ijs; et quatuor quart. avene, precium [quart.] ix d. Summa omnium bonorum, xiijs.

Willelmus de Quotil habet ij boves, precium quilibet vs; vaccas, precium quilibet iijs; et unum vitulum, s; et unum equum, precium ijs et vjd, avene, precium ix d. Summa omnium bonorum, xxvijs.

Adam de la Lyed habet ij vaccas, precium quilibet iijs; precium quilibet vjd. Summa omnium bonorum, xviijs.

Ricardus de Hasilgref habit iij boves, precium quilibet vs; vaccas, precium quilibet iijs; et xij quart. avene precium quilibet ix d. Summa omnium bonorum Summa ix^e ijs vd. o.

Nicholaus de Bradfordmeduis habet ij vaccas, precium quilibet (ijs); et unum vitulum, precium ijs, et iij oves (precium quilibet vj)d. Summa omnium bonorum, xijs.

Gilbertus le Fraunsays habet ij boves, precium cujuslibet vs. Item vij quart. avene, precium quart. ix d. Item j affrum, precium ijs vjd. Item j hoget, precium ix d. Summa, xixs.

Robertus Pecher habet ij boves, precium cujuslibet vs. Item unam vaccam, precium iijs. Item viij quart. avene, precium quart. ix d. Summa xxs.

Rogerus de Holingref habet ij vaccas, precium cujuslibet iijs. Item unum vitulum, precium xvij d. Item v oves, precium cujuslibet vjd. Summa, xijs. Summa ix^e, xvjd.

De Grangia de Ildbrictop x vaccas, precium cujuslibet iijs. Item vj boves, precium Item precium iijs. Summa iijli.

⁵⁸ W. Brown (Ed.), *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy, Being a Ninth Collected in 25 Edward I.*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, Vol. 16 (1894), p. 89.

Vill of Quick:

Gilbertus de la Quyk oxen, price vs; and one cow, prices; and one horse, price and vij quarters of oats, price per quarterd. Total of all goods xxxijsd.

Euota de la Quyk has ij cows, price eachs; and x goats, price each vjd; and Total of all goods, xiiijs vjd.

Jowanas de Scheldlau has one ox, price vs; and one cow, price iijs; and a calf, price ijs; and four quarters of oats, price per [quarter] ix*d*. Total of all goods, xiiijs.

Willelmus de Quotil has ij oxen, price each vs; cows, price each iijs; and a calf,s; and a horse, price ijs and vjd; of oats, price ix*d*, Total of all goods, xxvijs

Adam de la Lyed has ij cows, price each iijs; price each vjd. Total of all goods, xviijs.

Ricardus de Hasilgref has iij oxen, price each vs; cows, price each iijs; and xij quarters of oats, price each ix*d*, Total of all goods, Total ix^e ijs v*d* o.

Nicholaus de Bradfordmeduis has ij cows, price each (ijs); and a calf, price ijs, and iij sheep, (price each vj)*d*. Total of all goods, xijs.

Gilbertus le Fraunsays has ij oxen, price each vs. Item vij quarters of oats, price per quarter ix*d*. Item j heffer, price ijs vjd. Item j hoget, price ix*d*. Total xixs.

Robertus Pecher has ij oxen, price each vs. Item one cow, price iijs. Item viij quarters of oats, price per quarter ix*d*. Summa xx*s*.

Rogerus de Holingref has ij cows, price each iijs. Item one calf, price xviijd. Item v sheep, price each vjd. Total xijs. Total ix^e xvjd.

The Grange of Ildbrictop x cows, price each iijs. Item vj oxen, price Item price iijs. Total iij*li*.

Summary of Goods and Values with Missing Information Inserted*

Tax Payer	Goods	Value	Total	Ninth
Gilbert de la Quayk	[4] oxen, price each 5s 1 cow, price [4s] 1 horse, price [3s 6d] 7 quarters of oats, price each [9d]	[20s-0d] [4s-0d] [3s-6d] [5s-3d]	£1-12s-[9]d	[3s-7¾d]
Euota de la Quayk	2 cows, price each [4s] 10 goats, price each 6d 1, [price 6d]	[8s-0d] [5s-0d] [6d]	13s-6d	[1s-6d]
Jowanus de Scheldlau	1 ox, price 5s 1 cow, price 4s 1 calf, price 2s 4 quarters of oats, price each 9d	[5s-0d] [4s-0d] [2s-0d] [3s-0d]	14s-0d	[1s-6¾d]
Willelmus de Quotil	2 oxen, price each 5s [2] cows, price each 4s 1 calf, price [2s] 1 horse, price 3s 6d [7] quarters of oats, price each 9d	[10s-0d] [8s-0d] [2s-0d] [3s-6d] [5s-3d]	£1-8s-[9]d	[3s-2¼d]
Adam de la Lyed	2 cows, price each 4s [21], price each 6d	[8s-0d] [10s-0d]	18s-0d	[2s-0d]
Ricardus de Hasilgref	3 oxen, price each 5s [2] cows, price each 4s 12 quarters of oats, price each 9d	[15s-0d] [8s-0d] [9s-0d]	[£1-12s-0d]	3s-5½d [3s-6¾d]
Nicholaus de Bradformeduis	2 cows, price each [4s] 1 calf, price 2s 4 sheep, price each [6d]	[8s-0d] [2s-0d] [2s-0d]	12s-0d	[1s-4d]
Gilbertus le Fraunsays	2 oxen, price each 5s 7 quarters of oats, price each 9d 1 horse, price 2s 6d 1 hoget, price 9d	[10s-0d] [5s-3d] [2s-6d] [9d]	19s-0d	[2s-1¼d]
Robertus Pecher	2 oxen, price each 5s 1 cow, price 4s 8 quarters of oats, price each 9d	[10s-0d] [4s-0d] [6s-0d]	£1-0s-0d	[2s-2¾d]
Rogerus de Holingref	2 cows, price each 4s 1 calf, price 1s 6d 5 sheep, price each 6d	[8s-0d] [1s-6d] [2s-6d]	12s-0d	1s-4d
De Grangia de Ildbrictop	10 cows, price each 4s 6 oxen, price each [5s] 1, price 4s	[£2-0s-0d] [£1-10s-0d] [4s-0d]	£3-0s-0d [£3-14s-0d]	[8s-2¾d]
Total Goods			£13-16s-0d	[£1-10-8¼]

* Insertions are in square brackets

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

The Society's website is at: www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk

This has full details of the Society's activities, publications, library and archives, and there is a facility to contact the Society by Email. An index to Saddleworth place names, a reference map of Saddleworth, and a bibliography of Saddleworth publications are included. There are links to other relevant websites