

Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin



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Cover Illustration: Ladies Hockey League Badge

Saddleworth Museum Archive: M/P/QA35

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AARON WHEELWRIGHT: HIS EARLY LIFE¹

Aaron Wheelwright

My name is Aaron Wheelwright. Born 7th February 1900. For years I have given a lot of thought to the fact that so many people know so little about their ancestors. In my case I knew one grandfather and he died when I was six years old. The other I never even heard mentioned. One grandmother died when I was 13 and the other when I was 24. I having at this time one married daughter, who had two boys. My idea is to write something about my parents and what little I know about my grandparents (mostly heresay) and follow on with my own life and experiences which will most certainly be from memory as I have kept no diaries or notes, but I hope that what I do write will be of some interest in later years to [my grandsons], to whom I dedicated this work. After all, by the year 2000 some of the story will be 100 years old, and it will be interesting to compare the standards and way of life over the years. I must also say at this point that I have been a sick man for several years, unable to work and no signs of ever being able to, so you must understand that the primary cause of this effort is to keep my mind occupied also keeping up my morale and I hope by God's grace I shall be allowed time to make a good job of it.

My grandfather, Aaron Wheelwright and my grandmother Hannah came from Rishton² in Yorkshire. They were farmers and came to live on a farm at the top of Wellyhole Street [Lees]. I understand they both came from very poor homes and their food was mainly porridge and potatoes. Their cloths were really patch on top of patch. However, they became very well known in the Greenacres and Oldham district mostly through the farm and getting to meet people on the milk round. It was mostly bed and work in those days with few pleasures if any, but by sheer hard work and good clean living they became highly respected. They had three sons and three daughters: John (my father), Walter and Tom, Annie, Emily and Mary, the latter still living (75). John opened a butchers shop at the age of 19 at 534 Lees Road in 1896, which incidentally was to stay in the same name for 56 years when I sold it in 1952 when I became ill. Walter was also learning to be a butcher as also was Tom. Annie became a dressmaker and opened a shop in Salem near Dove Street. Emily and Mary were milkmaids besides other home duties. Walter never married, Tom emigrated to New Zealand in 1911 and married an Australian girl. He worked his way up to owning a large butchers shop in Dunedin and after retiring in 1958 he and his wife came over here for a holiday last year (1959). Annie married Herbert Coop who worked at Platt Bros. (textiles). She died in 1918 and he some years later. Emily died in 1915 aged 26, my grandfather the following year, 1916, aged 60. They were both interred in a grave in the church part of Greenacres Cemetery (a few yards along the first turning to the left from the main gate).

¹ The autobiography is untitled and seems to have been written for his family. The account up to 1918 is reproduced here verbatim with some minor editing and additions noted in square brackets to add clarity. A copy is held in Saddleworth Museum Archives: M/GX/CG/Whe1.

² The censuses give Soyland (above Ripponden) as his birth place. He was the son of a handloom weaver who later, by 1871, farmed at Schole Carr, above Rishworth whilst Aaron, then aged twenty-five, was a millhand. By 1880 he had married and moved to Tamecroft, Saddleworth where he was farming twenty-five acres: Censuses 1851-81 and St Thomas', Friarmere birth register: all available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/>

The question of carrying on with the farm was decided for them when it was ordered to be demolished when the Glen Mill was built about 1908, so that the road could be widened. So, they all went to live at the butchers shop, 534 Lees Road [Salem]. By this time Walter was running the shop as my father after only about 2 years was relegated to working on the farm due to his drinking habits. About the time Tom went to New Zealand, Mary married a farmer, George Beverly of Moorside [Oldham].

As I have already said, I never heard my other grandfather mentioned but I remember my grandmother Stott very well as she lived with us until she died in 1913 aged 78. She was a regular attender at Springhead Chapel and knew the bible very well. She was a cotton worker at a mill called Grotton Hollow [Brookside mill], which naturally was situated at Grotton. My mother also worked there as indeed I did myself but I shall come to that later. I understand my grandmother lived in Calico at Lees before moving to Mayfield House in Cooper Street, Springhead, where my mother, Leah, was born. I have been told that whilst they lived at Lees my great grandfather had smallpox and my great grandmother was so poor that she applied for relief. She had to walk to Huddersfield and received one shilling and six pence every two weeks. This would be at the beginning of the 19th century with no transport only for those who could afford to keep a horse or donkey. The round trip would be about 30 miles. When she was before the relieving officer one day he said, "Mrs Stott, I don't think you need relief! You always appear nice and clean." She replied, "So long as I have a halfpenny worth of soap and a half penny worth of starch I shall appear clean."

Living at Mayfield House was my grandmother's brother and his wife and 5 children, but in 1882 a Dr. Leach built a row of eight houses called Knowsley and both families move into No 2 before they were completed. They put washtubs in the doorway at night. Dr. Leach had a load of coal tipped near by so that they could put fires in all the houses to dry the plaster. My grandmother's brother died leaving his wife Elizabeth Ann Stott and five young children. She had to go out to work to bring them up. She worked as a reeler at Woodbrook Mill and was allowed half a day off to wash and half a day to bake, (everybody baked their own bread in those days, also backstone muffins on a stone in the oven). This flat stone had another use as they used to wrap it in a piece of blanket to put in bed on cold nights.

We are getting nearer to my part of the story. In 1899 John Wheelwright married Leah Stott, at Hope Chapel, Bower Street, Oldham and the people who stood for them were, Edwin Ashton and Mary Ann Stott, the latter being my mothers cousin, daughter of Elizabeth Ann Stott. These two later married and may come into the story later. Previous to this marriage John Wheelwright had been kicking his heels on the farm, something which he did not like, being under supervision by my grandfather so he once more broke away and opened another butchers shop next door to the Cotton Tree Inn [on Huddersfield Road] at Waterhead. Before I go any further I think I had better tell you that John was fairly and squarely established as the Black Sheep of the family and turned out to be a habitual drunkard I am very sorry to say, as it affected my life very much. Public Houses were open from 6am till 11pm at that time. Beer was 2d a pint, whiskey 2½d a tot and cigs 5 for 1d, and it was common for men to go "on the spree" as they called it for two or three weeks at a time and, after they had spent up would have to settle down for some more. However after the wedding John and Leah moved into the shop at Waterhead and on 07/02/1900 I was the first-born son and was baptised Aaron after my Grandfather, although my father often told me he wanted me to be called Moses. They told me that I was born on the very day that

the Oldham Yeomanry went to the South African War. I know little more about the time we were at Waterhead but by the time I was 9 months old the real first trouble hit my mother and I. My father disappeared with the takings and my Grandmother moved in to take what was left to cover what she had lent him to go in the shop.

My mother and I returned to No. 2 Knowsley. This was the first of many moves as up to the age of 18 I lived in 23 different houses and then joined the army and travelled extensively for 4 years, 80,000 miles. Things may have worked out much different for my mother and I, but the trouble was, she was expecting another child and very reluctantly she decided to try to find my father although she often said it was the worst days work she ever did. It seems that my father always had a flair for Blackpool so my mother and Aunt Mary Ann, as we were brought up to call her, went to Blackpool for the day and sure enough he was there on the top seat driving a Landau or Cab. They went to see his lodgings and the result was that my mother came back for me and made a fresh start at Blackpool.

On 18/03/1901 my sister Hilda was born, then with a short breathing space between another sister Emily who unfortunately caught Scarlet Fever (probably from me as I was in Victoria Hospital there suffering from the same thing) but Emily died as a baby. On 12/09/1904 my brother Willie was born. All this time my father was getting deeper and deeper into the drink business plus driving his cab. My mother told me that he took the Mayor of Blackpool home one morning at 2am helplessly drunk and later the same day the Mayor, who was a Magistrate, fined my father 5/- for being drunk and incapable.

I started school there at the age of 3 and although it is hard to believe I have some faint recollections of it. However this did not last long as the Flit Bug struck again and we were back in Smith Street, Oldham early 1905. I attended Smith St. School [Greenacres] for a short time and then we moved to a house near my Grandfathers farm, and so another school. "Greenacres Grammar School". Although it must have been a private school before my time, I think it was then being run as an elementary Council School and was closed down in 1908 when Clarksfield School was opened. My father was at that time working on the railway near Manchester when he was picked up by the wind of a passing express train which threw him 30yds into a truck of coal. He was detained in Patricroft Hospital suffering from a broken arm and a twisted leg plus a few bruises. I can well remember my Mother taking me to see him in an upstairs room. He was soon transferred to Oldham Royal Infirmary where, upon being examined, it was discovered that his arm had been set wrong by a student. He was told to go home but not to have any thing to eat for 24 hrs and then report back. Sure enough he kept the food part of the bargain but later the same night he was found lying in the gutter as usual drunk and incapable. He duly reported at Oldham Royal the next day and they just snapped his arm on a bedside and reset it. For the rest of his life that arm was an inch shorter than the other. All this time my mother (who must have had a great amount of pluck) was trying to keep the bant in the nick as it were with three children and very little money to carry on with. I would like to say at this point that all the houses we ever lived in were situated on the top of a hill, up a back alley or at the end of a row. This I feel sure was no coincidence but my father's shrewd arranging so that people would not see in what state he came home at night for although we never knew at what time he would arrive we always knew in what condition. This was more than proved, as the house we were then living in was so close to the farm that we soon moved into a three-roomed cottage behind the farm.

Out of sight, out of mind as the saying goes. I forgot to mention that besides the lodgings at Blackpool we also lived in 3 other houses during our stay there.

I was by this time getting to know my father's side of the family and liked to explore the farm and play in the fields, which are now part of Greenacres Cemetery. Most dwelling houses were lit by oil lamps, as gas had not reached the outskirts of towns. I can well remember 7 or 8 people sitting round the big white-topped kitchen table cutting up the boiled meat to be made into potted meat for sale at the shop. I knew my grandfather to be a kindly man, but not for long as I have previously stated he was soon to die in 1906. I saw both he and my Aunt Emily in their coffins, something which has always stuck in my mind and I have wondered many times whether it is a good thing for a child so young to experience. In contrast my daughter never saw a dead person until Uncle Walter died in 1952 and she would be 21 at the time.

Towards the end of 1906 we were to make another move, this time to Delph and my father was working at the end of the line at Delph Station. The house we went to live in was very small cottage known as 'Rough Meadow Head'. It was situated in a field just off the Delph-Grains Bar Road. It must have been over 100 years old at that time, very small rooms with low ceilings and to give you some idea how small, I can best illustrate it by saying that we had a sideboard with a tall back and when my father got the bottom part in position he discovered that the back would not go on, so without much ado he simply sawed off the feet to get out of the difficulty. My mother said it cost 50/- when they were married. I would like to say that my mother was a life long abstainer and wherever we lived we attended some place of worship. Although it was never Catholic we must have attended all other denominations. This time it was Church and I found myself training to be a choirboy, but by the time I was being measured for my surplus we moved again, and as my mother often said we should have had a caravan. This time it was to another little cottage in New Delph just at the bottom of Gatehead Brow, and the name, 'Peeping Corner'. Hilda and I went to Hill End day school and the headmaster and his wife were there for forty years. They told me that they had also taught my father and one or two of his sisters. I remember the first day at that school, the teacher asked my name and how to spell it, I said, as I had been taught, Big 'A', Little 'A' 'RON'. All the class roared with laughter and I felt so humiliated that I just had to weep.

1906-7 and the Suffragette movement was getting under way. I remember Silvia Pankhurst and Anne Kenny speaking from a lorry in Old Delph. Photographs were taken and Hilda and I were on one. Anne Kenny and her brother went to the same day school as my mother at Shelderslow. Whilst at Peeping Corner another baby was born, a boy called Fred. Unfortunately he caught Pneumonia and died as a baby. He was buried on top of my Grandfather at Greenacres. Don't you for a moment forget that my Father's first thoughts were always BEER. He did not smoke or things might have been even worse, although he did steady up at times it didn't last long. It meant that after the drink came food in second place, and you can imagine we kept a very rough table and nothing ever seemed to get renewed. Coppers to spend were few and far between and I well remember finding an old coin which must have been in the ground a long time as I could not read what was on it, but I rubbed it on the doorstep of a sweet shop, opposite to the entrance to Delph Station until it shone and then went in and got one pennyworth of Popcorns. The shopkeeper was called Battye which seemed to be a well-known name in Delph. I think she really took pity on me as it looked nothing like a penny.

I suppose by now you will be wondering about our next move? Well here it is. From Peeping Corner to a house next to The Cross Keys Inn on the Delph-Huddersfield Road. As usual it was round the back. It was a three-storey building and a man and his sister lived in the front. He was called Handel Shaw and in the top room he baked cake, bread and crumpets, which he used to hawk from door to door to make his living. My father kept a few hens in a pen at the back and one good point about him (there is a saying that “The worst of us have some good in us”) was that he would have a go at anything. However, he got some new timber from somewhere and made a very good sectional hen cote in the cellar but found we were unable to get it up the cellar steps, so it had to be dismantled and rebuilt outside. The Landlord of the Cross Keys was called Johnny Kay, he had a son a little older than I but we became good pals and played together. He seemed to have everything he desired which was out of my world. He kept Angora rabbits in a stable. How I envied him. He was learning to play the piano and in the evening he was supposed to practise for an hour. I used to sit with him and many times at his suggestion I would put the clock on a quarter of an hour so that we could get out to play sooner. I was to be reminded of this many years later (between the two wars in fact) when I was taking part in the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas at Springhead Sunday School. He came to produce several of them whilst living in Hollinwood. Although he looked in the very best of health he died suddenly about 15 years ago at the age of 50. I must mention that they also kept pigs and poultry and, they had a pig with 6 legs and a duck with 3.

We continued to attend Hill End School and my brother Willie started to go from there. I don't think he liked it very much as many a time my mother had to follow him as far as the porch with the strap in her hand. About this time Hilda and I started to get a break at holiday times. She used to go to Aunt Annie's who lived in Westwood, Oldham, and I would go to either Knowsley or the butchers shop in Salem. My mother said it was good for us to get away from my father's cursing and swearing. I enjoyed it in more ways than one as I would get rigged out with something new at either place. Auntie Annie had no children and although Hilda didn't need much encouragement there seemed to be a lot of persuasion in some quarters. “How would you like to live with us? Uncle Herbert doesn't drink like your father; you will be able to have better clothes.” and other such things. All this went to her head and each time she came back she would weep and want to go back with them until finally my father said, “Oh, let her go”. She would be about 7 years old and I can only say she literally went out of our lives, but alas her little dream world did not turn out quite like she expected. Uncle Herbert did drink. Perhaps not to the same extent as my father. They were also very strict with her and on her own admission in later years the thing she missed most was ‘Mother Love’. My mother adored her and I think would have given anything to get her back, but it was not to be, although no papers were ever signed she was known as Hilda Coop in the Westwood district. So you can see how deep the persuasion had been on a young girl.

At that time there were no motors on the roads. All the gentry had horses and traps or gigs, and at weekends they would go for a trot around the Pennine hills and many would call at the Cross Keys for liquid refreshment on their way home. It was common to see 30 or 40 of these traps behind one another. They had all sorts of shining harness. I think the owners tried to beat one another as to who had the best turnout. Speed was much slower then, even doctors would go on their visiting rounds on a cycle. Perhaps that was all they could afford, but even they eventually came to the trap and then the car.

Mid-1909 saw us make another move to Herdslow Farm at High Moor above Scouthead Church. Once again at the top of a hill. 4 big rooms, a small kitchen and a dungeon of a place containing stone slabs where they could salt bacon and hams. A barn, stable and pig cotes. The toilet was about 80 yards away in a field overlooking Scouthead. It had a two-seater board and not having any door we could see as far as Ashton when using it. It had no can or pail so every so often we had to empty it and scatter the excreta on the land. It was a cold place to use on a winters day. This was too much for my father so with the usual ingenuity we built one nearer the pigsty and used a pail, which were in general use in towns and cities. They employed what were known as "night soil men" to empty them, actually during the night into a special cart. My mother used to say she had a ride in one along with a few more children of her age, but when we were told the truth it was a new one, which had come to Lees Station. Incidentally it is only during the last few years, 1958, that the last of these unhygienic things were converted to fresh water. You will be surprised when I say that the rent and rates for the farm and several fields was £5-0-0 a year. I think my father had one of his steadiest periods here as he worked hard to get a lot of hens and quite a few pigs on, but I must let you into a little secret. He also had a job as travelling salesman for 'Birch's Home Brewed Ale'. It was brewed at the Rising Sun Inn, Scouthead. He had their horse and cart to go round the villages with gallon bottles and you will understand when I say we always had a plentiful supply on the farm.

Winters and summers were very seasonal and I remember one fall of snow in particular. It took 6 weeks to dig out the sunken road to the Old Original Inn. Willie and I walked for 3 weeks on top of the snow to Scouthead School, not a wall to be seen. As you will have already sensed we were now at another school which was to be my last. I have always said that my schools included a Grammar and a 'High School'. Scouthead was very high up anyway. We also went to Pastures Sunday School. It was only a small but very active place. Plenty of concerts and singing. Prizes were given annually for good attendance. I still have several in my possession. There was always plenty of work to do on the farm, but most of our methods were very primitive. For instance, I remember wheeling manure round the fields in a old perambulator and when housing the hay we had one wooden hand drawn sledge and large pieces of Hessian cloth to carry as much as we could as long as it got into the barn. My father used to collect swill for the pigs and he would bring sheep's bellies and horse meat for the hens, some of the latter would find its way onto the kitchen table providing it was fresh. I had to take eggs to a few customers. The price at the time, one penny each and 13 to a dozen. Whenever we had pigs to kill, Willie and I would have to rise at 6am to help before going to school and then take a few joints round the district, bacon and hams were cured on the stone slabs, which I mentioned earlier. We seemed to be building up very nicely when a horse and box cart arrived on the scene and my father gave up his job as beer salesman.

Houses were being built in Birks Brow (Waterhead) and as the ground in one of our fields was almost all sand my father started to cart it down to the building site and, I suppose, would be paid something for it. I know it meant a lot of hard work for me as I had the job of riddling it every night, after school, but never remember getting any remuneration ever. My Grandmother Stott was now living with us, and my sister Edith was born 7th March 1910. It was a big surprise to me as I was then ten years of age and, contrary to children of that age today, I knew nothing about the facts of life and as for noticing any difference in my mother's figure it never occurred to me. I

well remember Edith being ill and my Mother sent me to fetch doctor Oliver from Waterhead at 2am; incidentally my father was blotto and in no fit state to go. When the doctor came on his pedal cycle he said she had convulsions. It must have been an isolated occasion, as I never remember her having anything like that again. It must have had some effect on my father as whenever he came home drunk and she was asleep in the cradle, perhaps looking pale as babies do when asleep, he used to wake her up just to be sure she was alive.

I must mention that I had 2 Dandy hens and a cock but never found any eggs in the boxes. Then one day Willie and I were playing on the hay in the barn when after exploring high up in the rafters I came across quite a batch of eggs on a six-inch beam. What a surprise it was. I also discovered a hole in the hay and, investigating I pulled out 3 young kittens. The mother did not belong to us but to someone at Scouthead, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away, and the remarkable thing was that after my discovery she took each one in turn by the scruff of the neck and carried and dragged them to her home. Although we had a cat of our own several others used to come after rats in the barn. My father used to have a man come on Saturday mornings with his ferrets and dog. That was if we seemed to be getting over run by them. Speaking of rats, both my father and Uncle Walter told me of the early days at the butchers shop in Salem, how they were over run by them. There were no fridges in those days and meat used to be hung in the cellar and of course scraps would be easy to get at. They said that very often, after closing shop on Friday nights, they and two or three friends would sit in the house in the firelight with a hefty stick each waiting for them to come out, and many a night they would kill 18 or 20 in a night. I suppose it was all due to the primitive way of living, such as poor drains and no sewers as we know them today.

On my holiday visits to Salem I got to know quite a lot of boys with whom I played, and people at the different shops as I had to do the errands for my Grandmother. I remember an incident, which may amuse you. (I would be about 10 years old at the time) she said she would pay for my clogs to be clogged which was rather a long job as it meant taking the leather uppers off the wooden soles and replacing them with new ones, also putting on new irons. However she told me to take and leave the clogs to be done and found me a pair of her old shoes which I was to wear whilst doing some errands. You can imagine that even at the age I was beginning to show a little pride and even started to part my hair and you will understand how I felt when I say that my Grandmother was very tall and hefty woman and had big broad feet. In fact she had to be measured for her shoes at a shop on Huddersfield Road near St. James' Church. The result was that I resented anyone seeing me stride twice before the shoes moved so I told the cobbler that I had to wait for them which meant perhaps an hour and a half of a job, this I did and needless to say, when I got back I received a good tanning and still had the errands to do.

If I were there on a Monday night Uncle Walter would send me to a butcher called George A. Brindle whose shop was near the Bluecoat School at the top of Horsedge Street, [Oldham]. I would go early and go to the pictures, just above the Royal Theatre until it was time for the butcher to return from Manchester with the extra offal. Many a time I would have 30lb of liver in my basket and if the tram was not coming at Rhodes Bank I would set off to walk and would be almost at Salem before it passed me having saved one penny tram fair [sic]. No wonder I am writing this in bed at 61 years of age. Perhaps the pictures would have compensated me. 'Keystone

Bobbies,' 'Hunchback Of Notre Dame' or Pearl White in 'The Master Key'. On returning to my own home at Highmoor Street it would be a long walk up by Lees and Hey and although I was not really afraid of the dark my mother would be standing on the farm doorstep giving what we still know as the family whistle and I see no reason why it should not be handed down for many more generations. Time was moving slowly on and by the time I was 12 years old, funnily enough, we were still at Highmoor. My Grandmother, with an eye for the future, had often said "Would you like to be a butcher?" and of course I said "Yes" but it wasn't to be as we were still literally poor due to the drink my Father indulged in.

I started working half time at 12 years old at Grotton Hollow Spinning [Brookside] Mill. One week I would work mornings and school in the afternoon, and next week the opposite. I had to be up by 5am to start work at 6am until 13.30 and be at school-boy two o'clock. We took our breakfast, which we ate at 8.00am until half past 8. When working mornings, we also had a work Saturdays until 1.0pm. I was learning with a man called Joe Lent (a cousin of my mother). He gave me 3d each week for about 3 weeks when I got a regular place with another spinner who was known as 'Owd Hynes'. My wage was 5/3d per week until I reached the age of 13 when I was allowed to leave school and start full time work. My wage was then 11/- per week. It was a very old mill and conditions were bad. Two pair of mules in each room and one in the loft, the latter being driven by straps from the room below. The wheels on the mules ran into the wall behind the creel, [the frame which held the bobbins] and the props supporting the ceilings were in the middle of the mule gate, the mule almost touching them. We always had to be away from them or we would have been crushed to death. When cleaning behind the creel we had to quickly crawl under and into the window recess the moment the mule began to go out. Those sorts of things were out when the factory act was tightened up. Time cribbing was rife and as this particular mill was in an isolated spot in Grotton it was a common thing for the engine to start 7 to 10 minutes early and run a similar amount over at stopping time. This was all right for the firm and the spinner who was paid piecework by the clocks on his mules, but those like myself and other people paid day wage worked many hours each week for nothing. I well remember one night when stopping time was 5.30 the engine was still running at 5.50pm and when someone went to investigate they found the engineer fast asleep. The mills were lit by gas and each mantle had to be lit separately but could be turned off in sections as required. There was a deadline for lightening up after the long winter, 14th February, and although it was dark sometimes at 5.30 you were generally aware that spring was not far away.

Cotton spinning was the only industry at that time around Oldham, and Platt bros. and Asa Lees made machinery. Anyone who got a job outside cotton was considered to be a person of some means or more educated. However there came a slump in the late 1920's and 1930's, which literally saw the trade off. I can give names of 30 mills in the Lees and

Springhead area, which have either been pulled down, or had the machinery taken out: Jap Mill, Grotton Hollow, Scouthead, Pastures, Woodbrook, Radcliffe, Thornlea, Livingstone, John Firth Booths, Rome, Springhead Spinning Co. (top and bottom), Clough, Woodend, Lees Union, Hopkin, Acorn, County End, Stamford, Oldham and Lees, Dowry, Hey, Further Hey, Pheonix, Owl, Athens, Glen and Windsor. Just have a look round and try to imagine where they all were. These mills employed a great number of people, most of the bigger ones between 200 and 300, and it was common

*Wheelwright family collection***Aaron (far left backrow) at Livingstone mill 1913**

to see young children taking their fathers', brothers' and sisters' dinners wrapped in red and white handkerchiefs. Mothers with children did not go out to work in those days and when I look back, those married women who did go out to work never seemed to have any children. In contrast, today they all go out to work and take the children to nurseries. This started during the 1939-45 war when women were encouraged to work making armaments.

During 1913 we once again moved house, this time to No 8 Knowsley, at Springhead. Our farm cat followed the flitting, running on top of the walls and made itself quite at home at once. I also moved from Grotton Hollow to the Livingstone Mill which was, although quite old, a bit more modern and had 4 pairs of mules in each room, most of which were installed in 1878. I was growing fast but only tall and thin and was glad when I could start wearing long trousers to hide my spindly legs. Naturally I came across much bigger boys who very often used to thump me and throw me about in general, so it was natural that I had a secret ambition to grow big enough to cope with these bullies. My wage was now 12/- per week and my spending money was one penny in the shilling, which was the general rule. So of course I received one shilling per week. Out of that I secretly saved to buy myself extracts of malt and cod liver oil to build me up, although it did not seem to have much effect as I was always pale and sickly, and longed for an outdoor job. We now started to attend Springhead Sunday School and Chapel where I was baptised as a baby. We had to go to Sunday school at 9.0am, then 10.30am we went across to the Chapel for morning service. Young children were allowed to leave about 11.0am but it was nearer 12 noon by the time service was over. Sunday School again in the afternoon, 2.00 till 3.00pm. Then Chapel again in the evening 6.00pm till 7.30pm. Teenagers belonged to the League of

Young Worshippers and had to sit in the front pews, in front of the pulpit and immediately behind sat parents and old people who could not go upstairs, so we were between two fires if we started to get a bit restless during the sermon. The minister would stop talking and just look down at us and on top of that I have had many a tap on the head from my Grandmother Stott.

Women looked old sooner in those days as from about 50 they wore bonnets and capes. Girls had stages of growing up. They wore their hair in ringlets or plaits twirled round in a bun at the back. Then wore different sorts of hats in stages until they came to the bonnets and capes. Most people wore button up shoes or boots, as they would be described today. Older people who found it difficult to bend down to fasten these buttons often had a different style with elastic let into the sides so they just had to pull them on. One thing you will hardly believe about boys, which is quite true. They wore skirts until about 4 years of age and then were breeched, as it was known. Nowadays they wear pants before they can walk. As schoolboys we wore knicker-bocker breeches, which fastened with a button just below the knee, and thick black broad-ribbed stockings, which went above the knee and were kept up with elastic garters, we also wore deep white celluloid collars, (like the Eton College boys). Also, round caps without a knob. Most men grew a moustache at an early age, which I always thought made them look older sooner. Then came a period of clean-shaven men and a kind of hatless brigade. In fact some boys never wore a hat until they were called up for military service.

I seem to be getting away from my story, so back to 1913. My Grandmother Stott, whom I have previously said lived with us, died in the October at the age of 78, which was a good age in those days. Edith had scarlet fever and had all her hair cut off because of head sores. She and Willie were now attending Springhead Council School. I went to live at No 2 Knowsley where my mother's Aunt Lizzie lived so that I might not catch the fever. About this time (1913) Aunt Lizzie's daughter, Aunt Mary Ann Ashton as we were taught to call her, came there to live, as her husband Edwin (Ned) Ashton went to Bombay to be a manager of a cotton mill. Things were following the usual pattern; my father was labouring on a building site in Shaw, and bought a rickety old bike to travel on. He very often arrived home leaning on it rather than riding, but as we lived in the end house he was soon inside and asleep in the rocking chair. Woe betide us if we woke him up, not that he ever laid a finger on us as my mother used to say "I can hit 'em if they need it", and would pick up the first thing which came to hand; which stayed his hand but not his voice.

We had to make our own enjoyments and games. Cricket, football, marbles, duck stones, peggy, rallyhoe and flying kites: even the men would find pleasure in the latter. I have seen them make big box kites and fly them out on string for miles. Girls would be playing jacks or shop with broken pots. At No 3 Knowsley lived the man I was working for at Livingstone and, although he and his wife have long since passed away, they would have been very proud to know that their unmarried daughter Vera [Sykes]³ is at the moment Chairman of Saddleworth Council. My Father's sister Mary, having married George Beverly about 1911, had been living on a farm at

³ Luke Sykes was a cotton minder who lived at No. 3. His daughter Vera Mary (1913-2001) was Chairman of Saddleworth UDC in 1960-61, census 1911, St Paul's, Scouthead baptisms & BMD Death index: all available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/>

Moorside [in Strinesdale] but moved into a Newsagents and Tobacconists shop in Eccles New Road, Weaste [Salford]; having at that time a girl called Eva, later (1914) a son called Ernest with whom I was to become closely associated in later years.

1914 and the war with Germany August 4th. Everybody was thinking in terms of the Boar [sic] War and said it would be over in three months. The Kaiser said it would be over in less, hence his remark "The contemptible little army". (Meaning us). At first only reservists and territorials were called, but plenty volunteered. Plenty of refugees were arriving in this country and appeals for funds were made so I, still being only 14, started to paint the Union Jack and French and Belgian flags on white ribbon and put a little gold pin in and sell for 2d each and by December I had raised about 7/6 which I handed in and I still have the letter of thanks from Mr. Bullivant. That was my first bit. 1915 and we moved house again, this time to Chapel Brow, Springhead, next door to the Morning Star Inn, which has long since been demolished. You may think I am plugging my Father's drinking habits too much but I am only trying to show you what sort of life we had and how much different it might have been with a little moderation. I well remember just before Christmas, 1915, my Father hated anything fancy such as cakes, biscuits etc. Many is the time he has thrown a jam pot in the fire. However about 3 weeks before Christmas my mother was making Christmas puddings in a lard mug so they could be hung up until needed, as was the custom. My Father came home drunk as usual and without a word, picked up the mug and threw it behind the front door smashing it into smithereens and messing all the cloths, which hung there. This would have been enough for most women, but not Leah. What did she do, but sweep all the broken mug and pudding close to the door when he was expected home at night. This made him struggle very hard to get in and also reminded him of what he had done. She did this for a fortnight and then cleaned it up, not I suppose thinking he had had enough punishment but to get tidied up for Christmas. There was plenty of activity at Sunday School. All teenagers took part in concerts, sketches and waxworks, and the boys formed a Pierrot Troupe like those you could see at the seaside under the direction of a Mr. Harold Roberts. Almost all the boys did something, either sing a song or recite and we all sang choruses and took part in sketches. I remember we did a turn called 10 Little N... Boys. At the front of the stage was placed a screen, about 3 feet high, and towards the end of the act we ducked down behind the screen and put clogs on our hands and raised them just above the screen, which made it appear that we were standing on our heads. In fact a lot of people thought it was so. We also did a sketch and I borrowed a tall hat of Uncle Neds', which had only been worn once, I was told to look after it and not get it damaged. I also had to wear a moustache and during my stump speech it came off and all I did was to pick it up and put it in my pocket. This caused roars of laughter from the audience. Then one of the boys was supposed to tip my tall hat over my eyes but instead he picked up a pop bottle and gave it a swipe right into the audience, which completely ruined it. Lucky for me that Aunt Mary Ann took it all in good part.

There was no transport at that time (only trams to Lees and Waterhead). After Chapel we all, 'boys and girls alike' would walk to Uppermill and back. I myself was friendly with a boy called John Waterhouse and he had a flair for keeping fit. We two used to go around Wharmton and Scouthead two or three times each week 'winter and summer'. We also went to Central Baths in Oldham to swim. We had a habit of going under the cold shower lots of times whilst we were there; John said "It makes you hard". Then we walked it back to Springhead. Very often on the walks to

Uppermill and back I have seen 15 or 16 boys and girls walking arm in arm all across the road. A thing you dare not do today, in fact it is not safe for one person to step off the pavement. Several of us boys used to go into John's cellar at his home to do a bit of wrestling. This all suited my secret ambition to be able to stick up for myself and as they were all bigger than I they did not knock me about as some did at work. This was all quietly giving me confidence until one day at work, one boy was always giving me a back-hander on the neck, especially if I had 3 jugs of tea in my hands. Incidentally, he was twice as big as I, and I was just entering the room when I saw him coming with the usual glint in his eye. I thought, "This is it". So I put the tea down on a window bottom and with real good timing I clenched my fist and hit him right on the nose, which started to bleed very badly. This did not worry me as I felt in high glee having won my first retaliation with one blow. The big soft bully cried all during breakfast time and said, "you are all against me" when others kept shouting, "Oh, My Nose". Needless to say he never touched me again, nor did several others of his type. This did not swell my head at all as I was satisfied to be left alone. My Mother used to say "Lay your feet into 'em". And another favourite saying of hers was, "A bit of bant only stretches so far".

The war was still going on after our retreat from Mons and there were plenty of soldiers knocking about. The 7th Duke of Wellington's were camping out at Springhead and were getting plenty of volunteers. I remember a recruiting meeting outside the Dog and Partridge. Officers and N.C.O.s were on a lorry drawn up in the front of the door, appealing to men to join up for service. Of course I was very patriotic and had thoughts of going but I was only 15. However they did a lot of talking and they even made a chap think it was his duty to go, so I finished up standing on the lorry with several other boys. All of a sudden I felt someone tug at my coat and I found myself flat on my back in the public house doorway. My Mother was stood over me and said, "Don't be a fool, let your father go before you". She used to pray for 3 years without him, and she got it when he was called up in October 1916 under the Kitchener scheme. I settled down to wait my turn but little did I think it would come. Oldham, like many other towns formed their own volunteer battalion The 24th Manchesters (Oldham Pals). Many older men were being called up now, in fact you could almost tell their ages as they went. 19 years of age was the youngest they could be called at that time. Tom Shaw, Joe Wragg and Fred Schofield were called up in the spring of 1916, and quite a crowd in 1917. Tom Shaw was in the Duke of Wellington Regiment and went to France in June 1916, but was unfortunately wounded on The Somme on Mossley Wakes Saturday Night, July 1916. He was invalided home and found himself in hospital at Boundary Park, Oldham. He lost the sight of one eye but managed the job of Assistant Clerk to Saddleworth Urban District Council for 40 years, and he retired in 1960. I especially mention him as he was later to become my Brother-in-law when I married his sister Alice.

In February 1916 I moved from Livingstone to the Rome Mill to take Joe Wragg's place that was called up. Rome was a very big, modern mill built around 1907 or 8. It had 14 pairs of spinning mules in each room. It was considered to be the largest cotton mill within 4 walls. I worked for a man called Frank Wainwright who was good to work with and really a glutton for it, although he organized it so that we had mad spells and easier ones (work I mean). Despite all this I was still pale and sickly and longed for the fresh air. My wage was now 18/- per week but the spending money still 1d in the shilling. I was still keeping on with the cod liver oil and malt, and managed to save enough to buy a pair of chest expanders and used them every night.

Willie never seemed interested. Even if we had a holiday and we both went to Glodwick Baths [Oldham]. I would go in to have a swim but not him. He would have a private bath and then come to wait for me in the plunge. I remember he waited one morning when I was the only one in and I thought it a good chance to see how far I could swim, so Willie sat in a cubicle and counted 75 lengths of the bath which was 1 mile, when I gave up as it was near dinner time. I don't ever remember him going in the plunge at all. (Matter of confidence).



Wheelwright family collection

Aaron aged sixteen

In the spring of 1916 we moved house. This time to 20 Valentine St. off New Earth St. [Clarksfield, Oldham]. It was a square block next to the rebuilt mill, Oldham Doubling Co. as it is today. There are three houses in the block. The front one would have 5 rooms and another was 2 rooms. Ours was 6 rooms and round the back as usual. No front door but 3 back doors. Anyway, I can't remember whether my Father was out of work or what but he went to Blackpool for the summer season to work as usual on a horse drawn cab or landau.

The Oldham Holidays were on the last Saturday in August at that time. This June idea is much better as, when the last Saturday was late in August, you could have most of the week in September when it used to be dark by 8.00pm. I had not been away for a holiday only once since we left Blackpool and that was to Morecambe in 1914 with Aunt Mary Ann, Aunt Lizze and Aunt Maria. However I had been saving up and several of the Springhead boys were going to Blackpool, 1916, so I decided to go with

them. After I had paid my railway fare, which would be about 2/- at that time, I had 25/- left to see me through the week and by very careful spending I returned home with 2/- left. Boarding was unheard of amongst the lower classes and folks used to buy their own food as we boys did, a double bed was 2/- per night. My share would be 7/- and we all paid this to the landlady on arrival to make sure she got it. We then put 5/- into a box each and spent at it until it required more. There were several girls from Springhead and some from Chadderton in the same lodgings so we all had a very good time. So that you will understand how I made the money go round I will tell you how: one afternoon I plucked up enough courage to ask one of the Chadderton girls if I could take her for a walk along the front. I was pleased when she said yes and felt a foot taller if not broader. We walked about for a while and she said her legs had begun to ache, so I said would she like to sit down for a time, of course she said yes, but on looking round we saw that all the Promenade seats were full so very reluctantly I suggested a deck chair which would be probably 2d or even 1d for the afternoon, so believe it or not I got one for her and I sat on the sand beside her, that was not all, I also paid for two 1d ice cream wafers. Whether she could not see me being rich or not I shall never know, but I did not take her out again. In fact I only remember seeing her once since in 45 years. I must say, she did not, nor any of her friends, make anything of it to make me feel ashamed. You see, all the other boys had much more money than I had. One day we saw my father on the cab rank waiting for a fare, so one of the boys said, "What about a drive round?" to which they all agreed. I wasn't very particular as it meant more spending, which looked like luxury spending to me. However we had a nice drive but when it came to paying up, I was very relieved when my Father let me off without paying. I must say at this point that your Grandmother was one of those Springhead girls but it was 3 years before cupid fired his arrow. My father came home at the end of the season and was called into the army in the October. He was put in 2/ The Royal Garrison Artillery which were the big guns in those days. He had a few months training and soon found himself in France, around Ypres. This started my Mother's long prayed for wish.

Willie and Edith were now attending Roundthorn day school but we all kept going to Springhead Sunday School and Chapel. During the spring of 1917 several of the boys were called up including my friend J. Waterhouse. He was put in The Northumberland Fusiliers. In the autumn of the same year pretty well all those who were older than I were called up. The calling up age was 19 then. I started to go out with John's cousin, John Jenkinson, who never was called up, as he was 3 years younger than I. In fact I think I was the last Springhead boy to go. During this period I was frantically preparing myself for the day. As you may have already been told, I never liked being caught napping and always tried to be that yard in front, which often stood me in good stead. Having a spare bedroom at home I rigged up a punch ball with a nail bag and my chest expanders. 3 strands at the top and two at the bottom and used to have a go every night. At first the skin came off my knuckles but gradually they hardened up and I was getting more confidence all the time. History was about to repeat itself as the boy who worked the next pair of mules to me at Rome mill had also been pushing me around. One day he threw a wooden bobbin at me, this did not hit me but broke me quite a lot of cotton ends, which would need piecing up. Anyway I just picked up the bobbin and threw it at him, whether it hit him or not I do not know but it was sufficient for him to know that I had retaliated, so he came walking towards me with his fists clenched as did the boy at Livingstone mill. The only mistake he made was that he did not raise them and before he could do I hit him

smack on the nose, which bled profusely. Two battles won with two blows. You see I still kept my training a secret and everyone seemed surprised at the result. He was another one who left me alone afterwards and also others took the hint. My Mother used to say, "He who gets the first blow in wins". Never go looking for trouble but always be prepared to stick up for yourself. If it should be that you have not already followed this maxim during your young life I do hope you instil it into your children, if any. Although I didn't realize it at the time, my Mother was also training me for the time I should have to go in the forces. She was everlasting bringing up the subject of bad women I should come across and of the different diseases I could catch if I bothered with them. In fact by the time I got into the army and attended the lectures we received from the Medical Officers about this matter I can honestly say I was more afraid of the women than the Germans. The time was drawing near and on my 18th birthday I received one months notice to report at Lady Smith Barracks, Ashton Under Lyne. This was the depot of the Manchester Regiment. Due to heavy losses of men killed and wounded during 1916-1917 boys were being called up at 18 years of age, but were not suppose to be sent abroad until they were 18½. After all what else could we be described as, only boys. I weighed 118lb (8 stone 6 pounds) in my birthday suit.

November 24th 1960

16 Malta Street,
Salem, Oldham,
Lancashire

EARLY SADDLEWORTH RECORDS 7

A Thirteenth Century Signification of Excommunication

Victor Khadem

Amongst the documents published last year in the Coventry and Lichfield Diocese volume of the English Episcopal Acta series is a signification of excommunication dateable to between 1245 and 1259, relating to ‘the wife of Robert the clerk of Saddleworth’.¹ A transcription and translation of the whole document is reproduced here. It is accompanied by an explanation of the process by which excommunicated individuals were ‘signified’ by bishops to the secular authorities and a discussion of who Robert the Clerk and his wife may have been. Specifically, the role Robert the Clerk may have played within the chapel at Saddleworth will be considered.

Since the Conquest, the Church had sought the assistance of the secular authorities in reprimanding those who had stubbornly remained excommunicate.² Signification, the naming of such excommunicated men and women, was just one part of this process, but it is that part of the process for which records are extant. In order to appreciate the legal position the wife of Robert the Clerk found herself in, it is necessary to begin with the ecclesiastical courts.

Ecclesiastical courts had considerable competences. They were wholly responsible for regulating the lives of the clergy, and their influence was felt on the laity too. They could discipline lay people who had committed some moral offence such as adultery or fornication and they determined certain civil cases brought between individuals, for instance in cases of slander, divorce or disputed probate.

One of the principal powers invested in ecclesiastical courts was the ability to excommunicate. Minor excommunication would leave an individual unable to receive the Eucharist or celebrate mass, whilst major excommunication saw the excommunicate ostracised from the Christian community – he or she was not allowed into church, could not associate with any Christians, was deprived from pleading in secular and ecclesiastical courts and would not be given a Christian burial.³ But excommunication was not meant to be permanent, rather it was intended to coerce an individual into reconciling himself with the Church, seeking absolution, and doing penance for whatever the court had found him to be guilty of. This was not always the case however, and excommunicates could remain outside the Church. When this happened the Church invoked the aid of the secular authorities to arrest and imprison the obdurate individual in question.⁴ Central to this process was ‘signification’, the formal naming of the excommunicate by the bishop to the king’s chancery. It is this part of the process to which the document below relates.

There were stringent limitations placed upon the process which must be appreciated, if the wife of Robert the Clerk’s signification is to be fully understood. The power to

¹ J.H. Denton & P.M. Hoskin (Eds), *Coventry and Lichfield 1215-1256*, English Episcopal Acta 43, Oxford, 2014, No. 283, p. 348. For the dating, see the note at the end of the article.

² The following discussion is based on F.D. Logan, *Excommunication and the Secular Arm in Medieval England*, Toronto, 1968.

³ *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 15.

signify was limited to bishops (with but a few exceptions), and they were limited to naming either individuals domiciled within their diocese, or those who were party to a case which was based in their diocese.⁵ Crucially, the bishop could only request the assistance of the secular arm in cases of contumacy, that is to say, for failing to comply with the orders of an ecclesiastical court, and the individual must have remained in contumacy for forty days and more. The most common form of disobedience was non-appearance at court, though leaving a case before it had finished and failing to obey the decisions of a court also constituted contumacy.⁶ Thus the wife of Robert the Clerk had not been excommunicated because of her guilt in a specific civil or criminal case, but rather, because she had failed to comply in some way with the orders of the ecclesiastical court, had been excommunicated for this, and had remained excommunicate for forty days or more.

Following signification, the chancery would issue a writ *de excommunicatio capiendo* to the sheriff who had jurisdiction over the excommunicate (in the case of the wife of Robert the Clerk, presumably the sheriff of York).⁷ With this he had the authority to arrest and imprison the contumacious excommunicate until they became reconciled with the Church. It should be noted that not all significations resulted in imprisonment, and there was always scope for reconciliation to occur prior to capture.

Whilst the original reason for the wife of Robert the Clerk being hauled before the ecclesiastical courts cannot be determined, because she is named in the same signification with twelve others, we know that they were all party to the same original suit.⁸

The names indicate the signified individuals came from a wide geographic area – ‘Salesbr’, might relate to Salesbury to the north in Blackburn Hundred, whilst to the south ‘Besloue’ might be Baslow in Derbyshire or even Beslow in Shropshire. Four of the signified however appear to have originated in Leyland Hundred, Lancashire to the west of Chorley: Eccleston, Coppull and Mawdesley (‘Muthesleg’) are all but a few miles from one another. Another, ‘Galfridus de Cherloc’, may also be from that area – ‘Cherloc’ might be identified as either Chorley or Charnock. This suggests that Robert the Clerk’s wife was associated with this area, and might herself have originated from there. If this were the case, it might also suggest that Robert the Clerk too was from or had close connections with Leyland Hundred. That the pair should originate or have ties with a place some 40 miles distant is consistent with the pattern of migration into Saddleworth during the thirteenth century.⁹

It is finally worth considering the identity of Robert the Clerk of Saddleworth, and asking whether his name implies he was curate at the chapel at Saddleworth. It seems probable that he can be identified with ‘Roberto clerico’, the last named witness to (and probable writer of) a charter relating to Fernlee, which must post-date September 1260.¹⁰ The term ‘clerico’ has a number of connotations. It is the generic term for any man in holy orders, however this did not necessarily mean he was in full orders,

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 26-30 & 35-42.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 44-53.

⁷ For a detailed description of the whole process from signification to capture see *ibid.*, pp. 79-109.

⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

⁹ V. Khadem, ‘Early Saddleworth Records 5 – The Peak Forest Eyre c.1250-1’, *Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 28-29.

¹⁰ V. Khadem, ‘Early Saddleworth Records 4 – Miscellaneous Charters in the Raines MSS’, *SHSB*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 76-77.

nor did it mean he was occupied with religious activities; for example, he might serve within a household as an administrator. But in official documents such as this signification, the term 'clerk' does seem to imply someone in lower orders, and is often distinguished from 'capellano' for instance.¹¹ Thus, many rectors who were undoubtedly in minor orders, such as those at Eccles¹² and Rochdale,¹³ were often described as 'clericus', in contrast to a man like William de Dimplington, the thirteenth century vicar of Rochdale, who is consistently styled 'vicarius' (vicar) or 'capellanus' (chaplain).¹⁴

The clearest evidence for Robert the Clerk not being curate of Saddleworth is his marriage. Clerical celibacy and marriage in the two centuries prior to the signification had been a major source of contention. It was not until the Gregorian reforms of the mid-eleventh century that Rome had pushed for the celibacy of priests. In England the process by which this was achieved was slow, and in many cases remained incomplete. However, the Lateran Councils of 1123 and 1139 specifically forbade priestly marriage, the marriage of clerics in full orders, and, Anne Barstow has argued, 'the enforcement of celibacy ... was largely successful among the English clergy in major orders by 1150'.¹⁵

Even if Barstow's assertion is not applicable to a remote district like Saddleworth, it was undoubtedly the case that the ecclesiastical authorities would not have condoned priestly marriage. The language of the signification is therefore notable. Robert the Clerk has a wife ('uxor'), implying legitimacy and legality, something which the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield would hardly sanction in his signification to the royal chancery. Instances of 'uxor' in relation to priestly marriage are rare, and when they do occur seem to have been applied in a rhetorical rather than a legal sense.¹⁶ Contemporary descriptions for the partners of priests were at best 'concupina' (concubines), but were often more derogatory, 'focaria' (hearth mates) or 'meretrices' (whores), for example.¹⁷

Robert the Clerk's legitimate marriage does not necessarily preclude the possibility that he was in minor orders, a *clericus uxoratus*.¹⁸ Men in minor orders often assisted the curates of even small chapels like Saddleworth. During the middle of the

¹¹ In a charter of the early thirteenth century relating to Kirkheaton, the witness list contains the various epithets between clerics all of the same place. There is 'Ada persona [rector] de Hetun, Galfrido capellano [chaplain] de Hetun, Umfredo clerico [clerk - in other contemporary documents he is referred to as 'de Hetun']'. W. Farrer (ed.), *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 6 vols, iii, Edinburgh, 1916, p. 347.

¹² W.A. Hulton (ed.), *The Coucher Book or Chartulary of Whalley Abbey*, 4 vols, i, Chetham Society, 1847, p. 64.

¹³ F.R. Raines, *The Vicars of Rochdale*, 2 vols, i, Chetham Society i (N.S.), 1883, p. 4.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

¹⁵ A.L. Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh-Century Debates*, Texts and Studies in Religion, New York, 1982, p. 10.

¹⁶ An example of the use of 'uxor' in a rhetorical sense is found in the *Historia Anglorum* of the early twelfth century written by Henry of Huntingdon (who had inherited the archdeaconry of Huntingdon from his father). He was less than sympathetic to the attempts at imposing clerical celibacy upon England, and refers to the partners of clerics as 'uxor'. Helen Parish argues this was an 'optimistic' term, showing him to be determined to establish the legality of such unions. See H. Parish, *Clerical Celibacy in the West c.1100 – 1700*, Ashgate, 2012, pp. 119 & 121.

¹⁷ H.M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy in England, 1066-1216*, Oxford, 2014, pp. 180-181.

¹⁸ Barstow, *Married Priests*, p. 3.

thirteenth century, however, the ability of married men in minor orders to serve at the altar began to be questioned because it was felt their desire to please their wives would mean they were unable to devote their full attention to God.¹⁹ A statute of the diocese of Durham dateable between 1241 and 1249 restricted married clerics in minor orders from assisting the curate of even a small church, whilst a statute of the diocese of Winchester in 1247 stated that like a layman, the clerk was not allowed to touch the sacred vessels nor minister in church. But there was variation between dioceses, and in a statute of the diocese of London dateable to between 1245 and 1259, the married clerk in minor orders was able to serve at the altar 'in urgent necessity'.²⁰ The limitations placed on assistant clergy were clearly developing during the middle of the thirteenth century, just at the time when Robert the Clerk and his wife are referred to. It is difficult therefore to be certain whether he played an active role in the chapel, giving the responses to the minister and serving at the altar, or if he was instead consigned to the rather more lowly offices of, for instance, bell-ringing and church-sweeping.

All this said, it might be questioned whether Robert had an ecclesiastical role at all. It was possible for a clerk in minor orders to dedicate his life to the secular rather than the divine. Households required administrators, as did the better off local inhabitants. Indeed, if Robert the Clerk is identified as the writer of the Fernlee charter, then it is in this context that he is perhaps best seen. It might be significant that amongst the witnesses to numerous Rochdale deeds contained in the Whalley Coucher Book appear: 'Michael clericus de Clegg', 'Michael clericus de Rach.', 'Michael tunc ballivo' (Michael then bailiff) and 'Mich. ballivo domini de Rach.' (Michael bailiff of the lord of Rochdale).²¹ If Raines is correct in suggesting these were all the same person, then there is here very clear local evidence for clerics operating, it would appear, wholly in the secular world. Indeed, in Saddleworth, like Rochdale, where the manorial lords were largely absent, the presence of a local official able to keep good records would be of paramount importance if the manor were to be run efficiently and profitably.

In reality Robert the Clerk probably bestrode both the secular and religious worlds. In this dual capacity this reference to him further adds to our understanding of Saddleworth during the thirteenth century. It firstly shows that aside from the minister at Saddleworth there was at least one other learned, literate man in the district, capable of reading and writing in Latin, and that there was the necessary demand for such a man from the resident tenants and possibly the lord of the manor. This buttresses the developing case for Saddleworth being a more sophisticated society during the thirteenth century than has been previously assumed. Secondly, if Robert the Clerk did have some role as an assistant to the curate of Saddleworth, then our understanding of the ecclesiastical history of the chapelry is considerably augmented by this reference. Nothing of substance is known about the clergy at Saddleworth until the eve of the Reformation, but at that date until the 1560s there was always at least one assistant to the minister. The reference to Robert the Clerk suggests this was the case in the 1250s, the earliest years of a minister permanently officiating at Saddleworth, and in turn suggests that this was a pattern which continued throughout the middle ages until the Reformation.

¹⁹ M.M. Sheehan, *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies*, Cardiff, 1996, p. 171n.

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

²¹ Raines, *Vicars of Rochdale*, p. 12.

Signification of Excommunication of *inter alia* the wife of Robert the Clerk of Saddleworth, dateable between June 1245 and December 1259 (The National Archives, C 85/217/9)²²

Exellentissimo domino suo [H. Dei gratia illustri] regi Angliae domino Hyberniae et duci Normanniae Aquitaniae et comiti Andegaviae suus R. [miseratione] divina Coventrensis et Lychfieldensis episcopus salutem et tam devotam quam debitam cum omni honore reverentiam. Noverit dominatio vestra quod Robertus Molendarius de Cophull, Galfridus de Cherloc, G... de Eccleston, Ricardus de Salesbr, Willelmus forestarius de Croft, ... de Leche, uxor Roberti clerici de Sadelwurth, Edde de Middelton, Henricus de Besloue et Salbe [?] de eadem Rogerus More, Rogerus faber de Muthesleg Alicia filia ..ndi de eadem culpis suis exigentibus sententia excommunicationis (meruer)unt innodari, in qua per quadraginta dies et amplius claves ecclesie contempnendo contumaciter preseverantes adhuc incorrigibiles existent. Quopropter serenitati vestre supplicamus attente quatinus predictos excommunicatos ad satisfaciendum Deo et ecclesie secundum consuetudinem regni vestri regia potestate dingnemini cohercere. Valeat excellentia vestra semper in Domino.

To his most excellent lord [Henry by the grace of God illustrious] king of England lord of Ireland and duke of Normandy Aquitaine and Count of Anjou his R. by divine [mercy] bishop of Coventry and Lichfield greetings and with the devotion that is due with all reverent honour. Know your lordship that Robert Miller de Cophull,²³ Geoffrey de Cherloc,²⁴ G.... de Eccleston, Richard de Salesbr',²⁵ William Forester de Croft, de Leche, the wife of Robert the clerk of Saddleworth,²⁶ Edde de Middelton, Henry de Besloue²⁷ and Salbe [?] of the same, Roger More, Roger Smith of Muthesleg,²⁸ Alice daughter of ... of the same, their sins having been examined, have served to be placed under sentence of excommunication, in which they have now remained stubbornly incorrigible for more than forty days, in contempt of the keys of the church. Therefore we request your serenity diligently that you should deign to enforce with your royal power the said excommunication to the satisfaction of God and the church according to the custom of your kingdom. May your excellency always have strength in the Lord.

²² I am grateful Dr Philippa Hoskin of the University of Lincoln for her kind assistance with the translation. The transcription is based on that which is given in Denton & Hoskin, *Coventry and Lichfield 1215-1256*, p. 348. The text in square brackets is obscured in the original and taken from the other mid-thirteenth century signification from the diocese.

²³ Coppull in Leyland Hundred.

²⁴ Possibly Charnock or Chorley, nearby Eccleston and Cophull.

²⁵ Possibly Salesbury in Blackburn Hundred.

²⁶ The editors of the *Coventry and Lichfield* volume suggest in their abstract that '.... de Leche' is the wife of Robert the clerk, however this interpretation seems to be unlikely. I have met with no examples of an 'uxor ...' having their own surname. Instead '... de Leche', and 'uxor Roberti' should be read as two separate people.

²⁷ Possibly Beslow in Shropshire or Baslow in Derbyshire.

²⁸ Mawdesley in Leyland Hundred.

Note on the Dating

The editors of the *English Episcopal Acta* volume say, ‘the signification of Bp. R. without dating clause has as its *terminus a quo* (earliest date) the beginning of the episcopate of Roger of Weasenham [1245]; since the king is still entitled duke of Normandy and count of Anjou the *terminus ad quem* (latest date) must be 1259, and the act could thus belong to the earliest years of the episcopate of Roger de Meuland.’

It seems probable that this signification is later rather than earlier. Firstly, after 1250 the bishop’s significations took on an identical form, of which this signification is an example.²⁹ Secondly, if as seems probable, Robert the clerk was the writer of the Fernlee charter, then this too suggests a date of the 1250s, as that document post-dates September 1260.

²⁹ Denton & Hoskin, *Coventry and Lichfield 1215-1256*, pp. xc-xci.

THE FAMILY OF ELI SMITH (BASIL WINDSOR), WHO SET AMMON WRIGLEY'S SONGS TO MUSIC.

Joan M. Kenworthy

In the Winter Bulletin of 2003 and Spring Bulletin of 2004,¹ Jim Carr described and illustrated a collection of papers relating to Eli Smith (1880-1949), music teacher and composer under the name Basil Windsor, who was well known in Manchester, Oldham and Saddleworth for his settings of Ammon Wrigley's songs to music and more generally for *Alpine Echoes*, a brass-band piece with cornet solo composed for Harry Mortimer. The papers had been offered by Mrs Helen Joan Barnes in Cumbria, from whom Jim Carr collected them for deposit with the Ammon Wrigley archive in the Saddleworth Museum at Uppermill.

Jim Carr was under the impression that Joan Barnes was the grand-daughter of Eli Smith, but her cousin Sheila Matthews added a note to the Spring Bulletin of 2004 explaining that Joan, like herself, is the grand-daughter of James Smith, one of Eli Smith's brothers. They had believed that Eli Smith had no children, no doubt because so many of his papers had been held by his brother James.

At the celebratory dinner of the Society in 2006, Joan Kenworthy (writing here), born in Oldham and a second cousin of Sheila Matthews and Joan Barnes, mentioned that Eli Smith was her great-uncle and referred to two of his four sons, Leon and Noel, believing then, though incorrectly, that they were twins. Cecilia Sidera (née Slater), also a great niece of Eli Smith and brought up on the Coppice in Oldham very near to Eli Smith and his wife Gertrude, confirmed that the names of the sons were Leslie, Cecil, Leon and Noel.

At that point, it seemed a great pity if Eli Smith's family, assuming there are grandchildren and great grandchildren, were not to know that the papers were in the Saddleworth Museum and so Joan Kenworthy put a message on the electronic message board of the *Oldham Chronicle* asking if anyone related to Eli Smith would get in touch. No direct descendants did so, but a surprising contact came from Peter Marsh in New Zealand (formerly of Oldham), whose great aunt was married to Eli Smith's elder brother, Charles. Peter Marsh was a keen researcher in family history and, with another friend, Glyn Collins, found the dates of birth of Eli Smith's sons and the dates of their deaths.

Children of Eli Smith and his wife Gertrude (née Holmes)

Leslie: born 4th August 1907 (Haslingden)	died February 1986 (Oldham)
Cecil: born June 1909 (Haslingden)	died September 1991 (Oldham)
Leon: born 11th May 1912 (Haslingden)	died August 1992 (Southampton)
Noel: born 4th January 1915 (Chapel en le Frith)	died March 2001 (Oldham)

¹ J. Carr, 'Eli Smith was Basil Windsor', *Saddleworth Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 13-23, and Vol. 34, No.1, pp. 23-26.

Cecilia Sidera has provided a photograph of the musical family to which Eli Smith belonged. The second youngest, he was brought up with his brothers and sisters, Charles, James, Harold, Jane, Annie, and the youngest, Harry Eckersley Smith, at 83 Spring Street, Oldham. Their father was also called Eli. Their mother was Cecilia, née Eckersley, born in 1841. Peter Marsh found that, although the name Cicely is given in the 1841 Census, she was named Cecilia in the Census for 1851. It seems possible that the family's enthusiasm for music was encouraged by her and even passed down from her side of the family, Cecilia being the patron saint of music.²

We were told that it was not uncommon for the brothers to play their string instruments together, with the doors of the house open so that neighbours could enjoy the music. Jane, and possibly Annie, played the piano. Harry (1884-1965), the youngest and a violinist, was to play with the Halle Orchestra for more than twenty-five years and later with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra until his retirement.

Eli Smith, or Basil Windsor, died in 1949 at 182 Coppice Street, Oldham.



Cecilia Sidera Collection

**Eli Smith senior, his wife Cecilia and their five sons and two daughters.
Eli Smith (Basil Windsor) is second from the left**

² Joan Kenworthy and Cecilia Sidera (née Slater) are grand-children of Jane Cobbold, (née Smith), sister of Eli. Cecilia Sidera's mother was also called Cecilia, no doubt after her grandmother, Cecilia, (née Eckersley).

SADDLEWORTH ARCHIVES

DELPH LADIES HOCKEY CLUB¹



Saddleworth Museum Archive, /P/QA32

Ladies Hockey League Second Division Winners, Delph, 1912-1913



Saddleworth Museum Archive, M/P/QA33

Delph Ladies Hockey Club c.1920s

¹ Saddleworth Museum Archives, M/P/QA, accession no. 2014.20.1-4. Acquired by purchase.

The Museum archives have recently acquired two photographs and two cloth badges relating to the Delph Ladies Hockey Club. Little is known about the club. It was founded before 1913 as a photograph shows the successful winners of the Ladies' Hockey League (Second Division) for the 1912-13 season.²

Hockey became a popular winter sport towards the end of the nineteenth century, firstly at boarding schools and colleges and then clubs were formed by girls returning home. The All England Women's Hockey Association (AEWHA) was set up in 1896 and *Hockey Field* the first journal dedicated to women's sport was established in 1901. Locally, Hulme Grammar School for Girls formed an after-school club in 1897³ but the sport was also taken up by working women. By 1910 a Ladies Hockey League had been formed in Oldham which, by 1913, had thirty-six teams in four divisions. In a situation that was paralleled in rugby the AEWHA disapproved of league competition and clubs playing in leagues could not affiliate.⁴ It would have been this league that the club joined. In 1917 it is stated that the league had been in existence for five years and included most of the clubs in the Manchester area. During the War the league was reduced to two divisions with 'Saddleworth' i.e. Delph? being one of the thirteen first division clubs.⁵

Hockey was not considered a sport for married women and all those on the 1913 photograph are 'Misses'. The social make-up is harder to gauge. Miss Storey-Bates would be the daughter of the vicar and Bertha and Florence Mallalieu are daughters of Albert H Mallalieu the millowner. Bertha had been educated at boarding school.⁶ But Ernest Shaw, the son of a plasterer, attended the club's Masked Ball in 1913.⁷ Perhaps, as with local cricket, the desire to have a strong playing team promoted social mixing.



Saddleworth Museum Archive: M/P/QA34

Ladies Hockey League Cloth Badges

² *Oldham Chronicle*, 5 April 1913.

³ Mavis M. Turner, 'A School for Girls' *The Hulme Grammar School for Girls 1887 – 1987*, Oldham, 1991, p. 24.

⁴ Kathleen E. McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women*, Lexington, 1988, p. 134.

⁵ *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 21 April 1917.

⁶ Census 1911 available at <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/>

⁷ Delph Ladies' Hockey Club Masked Ball Programme and Invitation Card for Mr E. Shaw, 1913: Saddleworth Museum Archives: M/CS/15.

THE CONVERSATION SOCIETY

Mike Buckley

Inns and taverns in the eighteenth century are often portrayed as unruly places; places where disagreements were settled by the fist and boot, and places to be avoided by polite society. Ammon Wrigley and Tim Bobbin sometimes portray them in this way, but in Saddleworth, as elsewhere, they had another role. They were places where public meetings often took place, auctions were held, the manorial court met and people gathered for entertainment.

Benjamin Buckley opened his newly built hostelry in Dobcross shortly after 1779. It was built on the east of the Square at the junction with Sugar Lane. Conceived on a lavish scale with three meeting rooms, the White Lion was no doubt intended to offer serious competition to the Swan and Kings Head, the existing inns in the Square. Buckley must have hoped that the pub would attract the better sort and become an important meeting place, a place of civility and good manners. What was probably a newspaper advertisement of the time hints at this:¹

23rd October 1784. *A debate at the Conversation Society, held at Benjamin Buckley's, "The White Lion," Dobcross. Whither is too fond Indulgence, or too severe usage of children productive of worse consequence?*

The Society seems to have been based in Oldham and held meetings in different venues, usually Oldham Inns. Other meetings advertised were:-²

5th January, 1784. *The following Question was debated in the Large Room at the Angel Inn, Oldham, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon: Whether has done more towards the Reformation of Mankind, Preaching or the Laws of Nations?"*

May, 1784. *Question debated in a large room at the Angel Inn, in Oldham, on Whit-Tuesday, at 3 o'clock: "Whether is Tyranny in Parents and Master's, or Insolence and Disobedience in Children and Servants, more Criminal?"*

29th November, 1784. *The following Question Debated at Three Lane Ends, near Glodwick:- Do Observation, Reason, and Holy Writ confirm the Doctrine of Original Sin?*

22nd February, 1785. *Question Debated by the Conversation Society, held at the House of Mr Samuel Clegg, Innkeeper, HEIGH SIDE, near Shaw Chapel: In a Married State, whether in general has more Uneasiness of Mind, those who have no Children, or those who have numerous Offspring?"*

The Society appears to have been relatively short lived. A few more meetings took place in Oldham along similar lines in 1785, 1786 and one in 1789, but there were no more in Saddleworth. Unfortunately Benjamin Buckley's enterprise had a similar fate; it closed its doors for ever as a public house and was sold in 1786.

¹ G. Shaw, *Annals of Oldham and District*, Oldham, 1904, Vol. 3, p.14.

² *ibid.*, pp. 2, 8, 14, 19.

THE SADDLEWORTH 1894 MILESTONES (addendum)

The following two tables were inadvertently omitted from the previous Bulletin, Volume 45, Number 1 and should follow page 21 in that issue.

SADDLEWORTH 1894 MILESTONES

No.	Location & Grid Ref.	Inscription	Notes
1	A640, Denshaw SD 97375 10698	Huddersfield & Newhey Road Friarmere: Huddersfield 13 miles; Rochdale 6 miles.	
2	A640, Dowry, Denshaw SD 98417 11021	Huddersfield & Newhey Road Friarmere: Junction 1 mile, Rochdale 7 miles; Huddersfield 12 miles.	Half buried with the inscription part underground.
3	A640, Denshaw Moor SD 99543 11992	Huddersfield & Newhey Road Friarmere: Huddersfield 11 miles; Junction 2 miles, Rochdale 8 miles	Half buried with the inscription part underground.
4	A672, Bowkhouse, Denshaw SD 97616 10976	Oldham & Ripponden Road Friarmere: Oldham 5 miles, Manchester 13 miles; Ripponden 7 miles, Halifax 13½ miles.	Missing. Damaged in recent times. Remains in Oldham Highways Depot in 2011 but now missing.
5	A672, Old Tame, Denshaw SD 96818 09577	Oldham & Ripponden Road Friarmere: Ripponden 8 miles, Halifax 14½ miles; Oldham 4 miles, Manchester 12 miles.	Badly Damaged. Stone plinth in place, upperpart of casting in place, rest lost.
6	A6052, New Tame, Denshaw SD 97358 09453	Oldham & Ripponden Road Friarmere: Delph 1½ miles; Ripponden 9 miles.	Badly Damaged. Stone plinth in place, upperpart of casting in place, rest lost.
7	A6052, Stubbing, Delph SD 97993 08237	Oldham & Ripponden Road Friarmere: Delph ½ mile; Ripponden 10 miles.	Half buried with the inscription part underground.
8	A62, Scouthead SD 96505 95640	Wakefield & Austerlands Road Quickmere Middle Division: Oldham 2½ miles; Huddersfield 15 miles	
9	A62, Wallhill, Dobercross SD 97849 06249	Wakefield & Austerlands Road Shawmere Upper Division: Huddersfield 14 miles; Oldham 3½ miles.	Stone cracked.
10	A62, New Delph Crossroads SD 98648 07452	Wakefield & Austerlands Road Shawmere Upper Division: Huddersfield 13 miles; Oldham 4½ miles.	
11	A62, Pack Horse, Delph SD 99552 08714	Wakefield & Austerlands Road Saddleworth: Huddersfield 12 miles; Oldham 5½ miles.	Badly Damaged. Stone plinth in place, upperpart of casting in place, rest lost.
12	A62, Deanhead, Diggle SE 00888 09593	Wakefield & Austerlands Road Saddleworth: Huddersfield 11 miles; Oldham 6½ miles.	Casting only
13	A669, Grotton SD 96736 04511	Oldham & Standedge Road Quickmere L.D: Manchester 9¼ miles, Oldham 2¼ miles; Huddersfield 16 miles, Holmfirth 12½ miles, Uppermill 2½ miles	
14	A669, Grasscroft SD 98263 04630	Oldham & Standedge Road Shawmere L.D: Huddersfield 15 miles, Holmfirth 11½ miles, Uppermill 1½ miles; Manchester 10¾ miles, Oldham 3¾ miles.	
15	A670, Uppermill SD 99474 05266	Oldham & Standedge Road Shawmere L.D: Huddersfield 14 miles, Uppermill ½ mile; Manchester 11¾ miles, Ashton 5½ miles, Stalybridge 5½ miles, Oldham 4¾ miles, Mossley 2½ miles.	Flat casting

16	A670, Woolroad, Dobcross SD 99659 06721	Oldham & Standedge Road Lordsmere: Huddersfield 13 miles; Manchester 12¼ miles, Ashton 6½ miles, Stalybridge 6½ miles, Oldham 5¼ miles, Mossley 3½ miles, Uppermill ½ mile.	Flat casting
17	A670, Harrop Edge SE 00127 08253	Oldham & Standedge Road Lordsmere: Huddersfield 12 miles; Manchester 13¾ miles, Ashton 7½ miles, Stalybridge 7½ miles, Oldham 6¼ miles, Mossley 4½ miles, Uppermill 1½ miles.	Slightly buried with the inscription part underground.
18	Huddersfield Rd, Diggle SE 00068 07489	Oldham & Standedge Road Marsland Branch Lordsmere: Manchester 12¼ miles, Ashton 7 miles, Stalybridge 6½ miles, Oldham 6½ miles, Uppermill 1½ miles; Huddersfield 12 miles.	Slightly buried with the inscription part underground.
19	Huddersfield Rd, Thurstones, Diggle SE 00843 08904	Oldham & Standedge Road Marsland Branch Lordsmere: Huddersfield 11 miles; Manchester 13¾ miles, Ashton 8 miles, Stalybridge 7½ miles, Oldham 7½ miles, Uppermill 2½ miles.	Slightly buried with the inscription part underground.
20	A669, Greenfield SE 00047 04040	Oldham & Standedge Road Road End Branch Lordsmere: Oldham 4½ miles, Greenfield ½ mile; Barnsley 24 miles, Holmfirth 10 miles.	Unknown Foundry. Not Brayshaw & Booth.
21	A635, Dove Stone, Greenfield SE 01574 04176	Greenfield & Shepley Lanehead Road Lordsmere: Holmfirth 9 miles, Barnsley 23 miles; Greenfield 1½, Oldham 5¼ miles.	Slightly buried with the inscription part underground.
22	A635, Upperwood, Greenfield SE 02086 05626	Greenfield & Shepley Lanehead Road Lordsmere: Holmfirth 8 miles, Barnsley 22 miles; Greenfield 2¼, Oldham 6¾ miles.	
23	A635, Saddleworth Moor, Greenfield SE 03486 06114	Greenfield & Shepley Lanehead Road Lordsmere: Holmfirth 7 miles, Barnsley 21 miles; Greenfield 3½, Oldham 7¼ miles.	Stone only in place, casting missing.
24	A670, Haddens, Mossley SD 97595 03421	Stockport & Ashton Road Quickmere L.D.: Huddersfield 16 miles, Uppermill 2½ miles; Manchester 10¼ miles, Ashton 3¼, Mossley ¼ mile.	Stone only in place, casting missing. The Huddersfield and Ashton inscription is recorded on the 1908 6" OS Map, the rest of the inscription is speculative.
25	Plating Rd, Lydgate SD 97229 04998	Stockport & Ashton Road Quickmere L.D.: Manchester 10½ miles, Ashton 4¼ miles, Uppermill 2½ miles, Mossley 1¼ miles, Huddersfield 15 miles.	
26	A670, Grasscroft SD 98257 04499	Stockport & Ashton Shaw Hall Branch Shawmere L.D.: Huddersfield 15 miles, Uppermill 1½ miles; Manchester 11 miles, Ashton 4½ miles, Mossley 1½ miles.	
27	B671.5, Wellhole Bridge, Friezland SD 98550 04100	Staley Road: Manchester 12¼ miles, Huddersfield 15 miles.	Missing. The Huddersfield and Manchester inscription is recorded on the 1908 6" OS Map, the rest of the inscription is unknown.

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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 any of the Editors 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.

Contributions for Vol. 45(3) must be submitted to the editors by 14th September 2015.

The Society's new website is currently under development and will have increased facility to access details of the Society's activities, publications, library, archives, contacts and include the facility to arrange and renew membership. An index to Saddleworth place names, a reference map. It is also planned that thousands of monumental inscriptions from Saddleworth gravestones and a comprehensive list of baptisms & marriages and a bibliography of Saddleworth publications will also be included.

