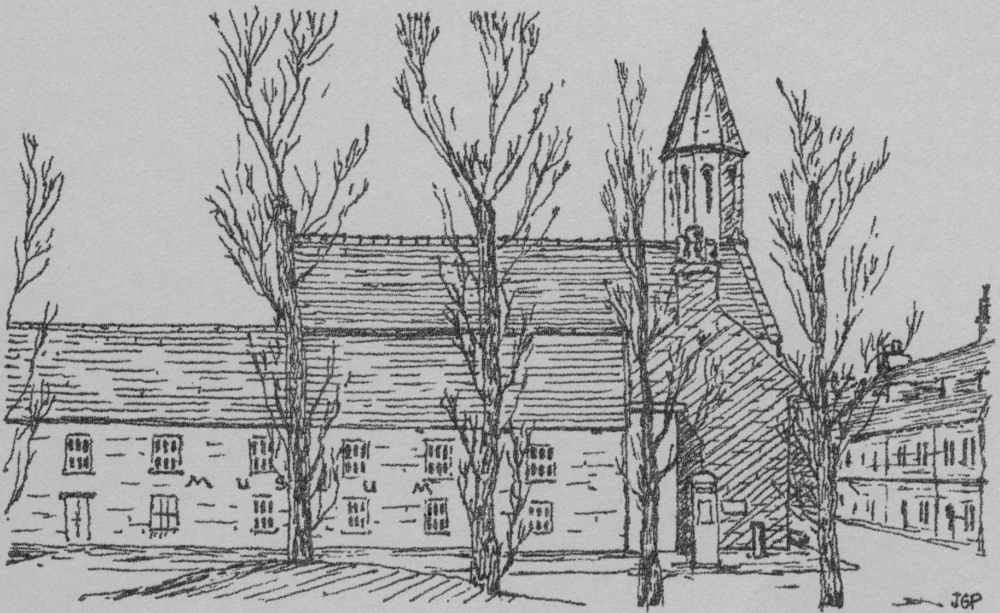


SADDLEWORTH

HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE MUSEUM - UPPERMILL.

BULLETIN

AUTUMN 1975

VOLUME 5 No. 3

BULLETIN
OF
THE SADDLEWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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WAR IN SADDLEWORTH A THOUSAND YEARS AGO

(The text of a lecture given by Col. Howcroft to the Society,
April, 1975)

The basis of this article is a series of notes prepared by my father, A.J. Howcroft, in the 1920's and 30's. He devoted much thought at this time to what must remain conjectural hostilities in our district, and even did a little excavation to test his theories. I have been aware of his notes since the time he wrote them, but on coming across them again recently I found they were more complete than I had imagined and have followed them closely in what I have to say.

To put it all in its proper setting I must begin with a little general history.

It is interesting to note that in the first millenium of our era our country was twice united - or unified. The first time by a mere handful of foreign soldiers, with the capable organisation of Rome behind them - a professional job, with limited objectives, inevitably achieved, and which were adequately organised before the next step forward, so that with very few setbacks England, less Northumbria, was conquered and organised and on its way to civilisation within forty years of the invasion under Claudius in 43 A.D.

The job became tougher as the armies advanced further north and it was another 40 years or so before Northumbria was conquered and an effective limit to the conquest set by Hadrian's Wall. It should be realised that the forces for the conquest never exceeded four legions plus auxiliaries - less than 100,000 men - and that order was maintained afterwards and the country defended by three weaker legions and auxiliaries - probably only 20 or 30,000. Such was the efficiency and economy of the Roman system. Northumbria remained something of a special case. Throughout the occupation, 300 years or more, the country north of the Humber and Mersey was administered as a separate province, "Maxima Caesariensis", with a military rather than a civil organisation. It may well be that this different organisation caused Northumbria to regard itself as different from the rest of England, even centuries later when the Romans were forgotten.

With the Roman departure about 400 A.D. began a period of many centuries of invasion, ruin and disorder. At first the trouble was piratical raids, but then followed settlers of whom the Saxons were the most numerous. The more prominent of the Romanised Britons seem to have been pushed away westwards, but it would be a mistake to imagine that the practical Saxon did not realise the advantage of keeping some slave labour on his newly conquered land. Without doubt large numbers of Britons remained and were absorbed in the community.

The new settlements organised themselves, formed little kingdoms which coagulated till there were at some moment seven of them - the Heptarchy of our history books. Of these the strongest were Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex, and each of these three claimed at different periods the title of King of the English or King of England. Under Egbert and more certainly under his grandson Alfred, Kings of Wessex, England could make some claim to be unified. And it was by now a Christian country with a very influential Church.

Meanwhile, before 800, a new invasion came - Danes and Norsemen - of an energy and ferocity far exceeding that of the Saxons. So that the almost civilised Saxons now suffered the agonies that they had in their time inflicted

on the Romano-Britons. Like the Saxons, they at first raided and plundered but then began to settle, chiefly on the east coast but also via Ireland on the west. From their new settlements they made long raids into the country to such effect that even the Great Alfred - and he was great - was reduced to being a homeless vagrant.

But the patient, wise and brave Alfred came back. He fought or occasionally bribed the Danes back to their east coast settlements and at his death in 900 could reasonably claim to be King of England. But his authority did not reach Northumbria, by now practically a Danish or Norse country.

Alfred was lucky in his family. His son Edward was an excellent king. His daughter Ethelfreda married the Earl of Mercia, on his death succeeded him and turned out to be the better man of the two. And his three grandsons, Athelstan, Edward and Edred continued their grandfather's policy and success during their three short reigns. One still reads of raids by the Danes in most unexpected places in England, but the monarchy held fast. And that brings me to the more detailed events that I want to talk about.

Edward and his sister, Wessex and Mercia, now firmly allied, planned to conquer at least part of Northumbria; without it Mercia had no access to the sea except by the Bristol Channel, far to the south. So they began a scheme of fortifying the line of the Mersey - Chester, Runcorn and Thelwall. As an incident of this operation they cleared out of the Wirral a Norse colony which left behind it a crop of Scandinavian place names (typically ending in -by) as thick on the ground as anywhere on the Yorkshire or Lincoln coast and even including a Whitby. (There were also of course Scandinavian settlements, via Ireland, on the Lancashire coast - Crosby, Formby and Kirkby).

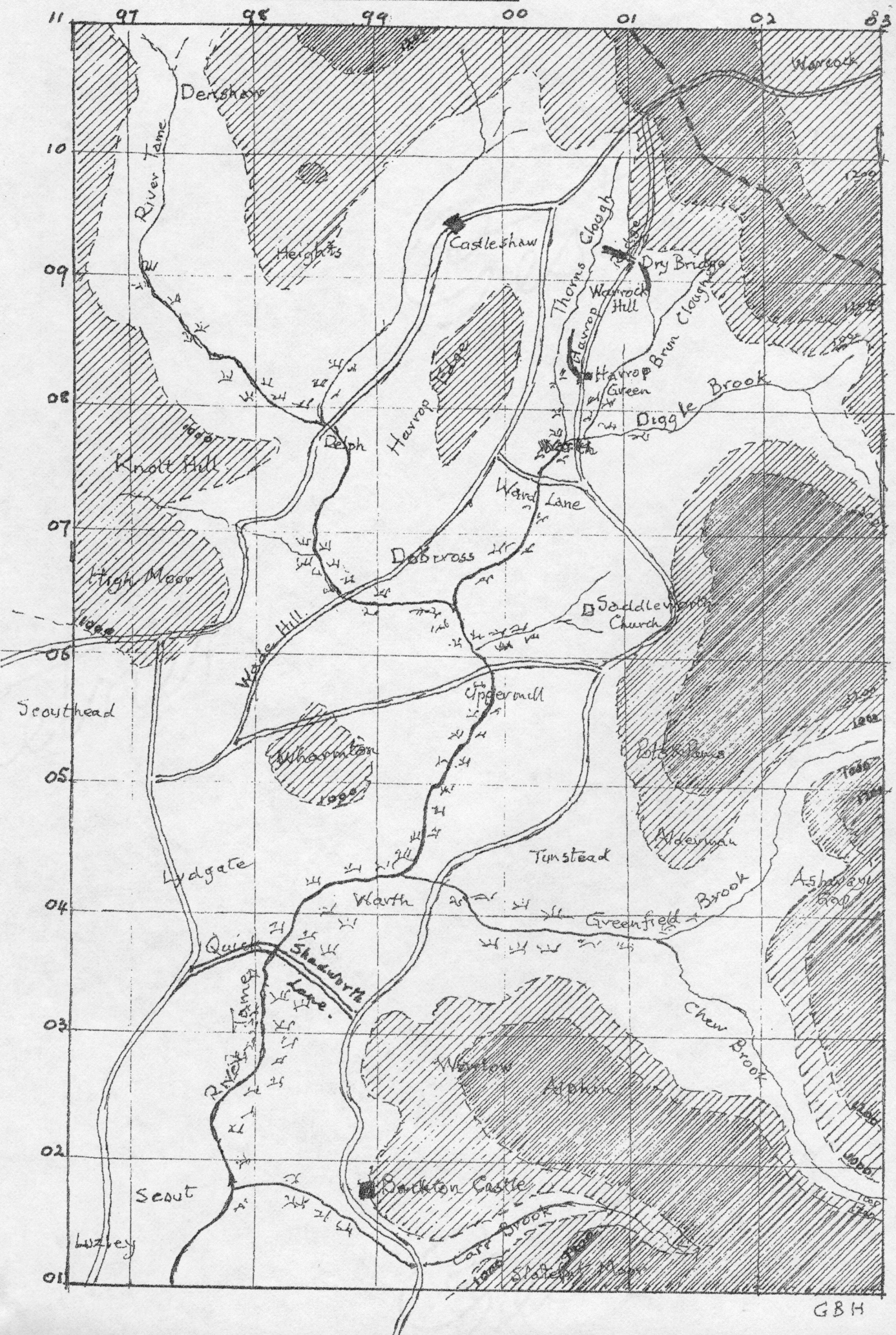
And finally, about 923, Edward and his sister seized and repaired the fortifications of Manchester (in Northumbria). The implication of all this was not lost of the Northumbrians. They gathered all the forces they could, their own and their allies'. There were Kings of Northumbria, Scotland, Strathclyde and Cumberland, and a number of Danish Kings from Ireland, all assembled in 937 on the field of Brunanburgh. Antiquarians for more than a century have disputed the site of this battle, some placing it on the Humber, some in the Midlands or even the South of England - not so unreasonable as it seems, for the Danes were exceedingly mobile. But it seems now to be accepted that Brunanburgh was Burnley in Lancashire.

The site for the battle is said in one record to have been agreed between the two sides - a very gentlemanly way of starting a battle, the further proceedings of which were by no means gentlemanly. It lasted two days and ended in the complete rout of the Northern Allies. Poetical accounts of the battle come from the Saxon Chronicle and an Icelandic Saga:

Here Athelstan King	Of Earls the Lord
Giver of bracelets to his nobles	And his brother also
Edmund the Atheling	Agelong glory won
By slaughter in battle	With the edge of swords
At Brunanburgh.	The wall of steel they cleaved
The foe flinched	The field was coloured with warriors' blood
Five Kings	Seven Earls and countless spearmen
And shipmen were slain.	Greater carnage hath not been
In this island even yet	Of people slain by edge of swords
The Northmen departed	In their nailed boats
Bloody relic of darts	On the rising ocean
Over the deep water	Dublin to seek
Again to Ireland	Shamed in mind.



Scale of miles



This decisive battle, fought by greater forces than ever before in England, established Athelstan as the effective ruler of England and as one of the foremost rulers in Europe. It enabled him to fix a recognisable boundary between Mercia and Northumbria - the watershed of the Pennines from the Ribble to the Peak District - the boundary which is set out in such detail in the early deeds relating to Saddleworth and which remained the Ecclesiastical boundary ever since. But in the deeds it survived not as the county boundary, but only as the eastern boundary of Saddleworth.

Northumbria had suffered a resounding defeat. But it recovered and within three years or so it again attacked Mercia down the east side of the country. They were defeated again by the new King, Edmund. And his successor Edred had again to march his army into the north to discourage these attacks. But as weaker kings of England followed, the Northumbrian attacks became part of the general Danish advance all down the east coast.

It is not to be imagined that, amid success south of the Humber, the loss of South Lancashire had been forgotten. It seems certain that some armed forces, perhaps minor and local, applied pressure to the new boundary, and that over a considerable period these forces pushed forward into Lancashire and were in turn pushed back, and eventually kept a small part of what they tried to regain.

Let us see why Saddleworth is so important in these operations. The map, which unfortunately is limited in extent, is an attempt to illustrate the points I want to make. I have shown some modern names which may help to follow details. But the essential structure of rivers and hills was the same 1,000 years ago, and I have shown only the roads as we believe they existed then. There were of course many other tracks, but these lines are the important ones.

There were two main obstacles which dictated the line of roads and hampered movement on any other line. On the high ground miles of peat, soft marshy peat, were then undrained as they have been since for reservoirs and canals and for the benefit of grouse shooters. And not at that time stripped of peat as miles and miles have been for fuel. The moors, covered with eight or ten or twelve feet of peat with awkward little valleys and even more awkward flat swampy areas, were very unlike the friendly moors we can walk over now.

I have shown on the map the 1,000 and 1,200 foot contours. We may take it as certain that on the 1,200 foot level, and possibly at 1,000 feet, there was peat. But see at Standedge how short a distance we have between the hard ground on each side. The map shows little of the wider moors, but we all know from our own experience what vast areas of peat lie on the watershed for many miles both to the north and south of Standedge. In fact the next easy crossing of the hills is at Todmorden leading to Burnley (and to Brunanburgh) on the north, and on the south far down in Derbyshire. And here we have the secret of why the old roads all converged at Bleakhey Nook.

The other obstacles to movement were the valleys. All these were thickly wooded and scarcely inhabited, even in much more recent times, and all the wider ones were marshy. I have marked, irrespective of contour, the areas which were certainly marshy, and hence even more difficult to cross than the moors. See how carefully all the old roads avoided the valleys, and if a crossing was inevitable how they chose a place where the river ran quickly and could be forded, and immediately they were across set off again up the hillside.

Nearly all the early settlements, mostly of a later date than the one we are discussing, were in the band below the 1,000 contour, down to perhaps 700 feet.

What, under these conditions, would the defeated Northumbrians attempt to do? They would see, from the top of Standedge, some of the land they had been robbed of. But you cannot defend a vital pass by sitting on top of it and looking enviously at the land ahead. A surprise attack by the Mercians could have pushed them off the ridge in a few minutes. What about pushing the Mercians off first? And so apparently they did and then organised their own defence. The concept of defence in depth was as essential then as we have learnt it to be in more recent wars. A satisfactory defence of Standedge requires the occupation of observation posts to watch the approaches, and even some area of the Lancashire Plain, and the occupation also of defensive positions somewhat ahead of the lookout posts.

We can all envisage the ideal line for observation provided by Hartshead Pike and Glodwick. Hardly less useful would be Scouthead, Lydgate, Wharmton, Noonsun, and Buckton Castle. So I suggest that the Northumbrian Commander would have chosen a forward defensive position on Strinesdale and the river Medlock, across from Hartshead to the River Tame and then up Carr Brook which rises on the moors behind Buckton Castle. This would provide a strong line on which to defend the approaches to Standedge and a firm base from which to go further into Lancashire if such an advance were attempted. For evidence of these military activities we have of course no written evidence and I have no knowledge of even any tradition. My father relied on two kinds of evidence - the examination of remains on the ground, and the fascinating, if sometimes baffling, attempts to interpret place names.

The Teutonic languages have a fundamental root, the word "war" and its many variations all meaning not war but ward or guard or wary. There are many examples, such as Warwick. Mottram Church stands on War Hill. We find in Saddleworth a surprising number of names of this family, all conveying this idea of defence or of watching. Starting first on the high ground (just over the ridge in fact) we have a little stream called Warcock rising just near the Great Western. We have Warth at the foot of Harrop Ridge (Warth Hill). Ward Lane crosses the stream opposite the Hanging Gate. The hill we call Noonsun is known also as Warlow. Across the valley is the twin hill, Wharmton. And at Greenfield is another Warth, just below Ladhil Bridge. A similar name occurs at Warrock Hill; but it is not the same word. It is a northern pronunciation of the word "wark" which we normally use as earthworks, and which is found in Aldwark (old defences in London), Southwark (defending the south end of London Bridge), and Newark (later marked as a great castle on a crossing of the Trent). Warrock Hill and Warrock Hill Foot occur in the valley between Harrop Ridge and Harrop Edge.

The syllable "har" in Harrop is another fundamental word, to hear or hark, in a military sense perhaps a listening post. At the top of Harrop Ridge we have Dry Bridge - surely a significant name to find high up the hillside where no bridge in the usual sense could have been needed. And we have Scout Head and another Scout at the lower end of Mossley as the narrowest part of the Tame Valley: the military connection seems obvious, though not every student of place names would agree. On the Denshaw to Ripponden road is the site of Sentry House as to the origin of which I would not even dare to make a guess.

An impressive series of names which cannot to my knowledge be matched in any similar small area. Let us see if we can link these names with anything on the ground.

Harrop Ridge seems to have been chosen as a key fortification - perhaps because the oldest of the roads run up the ridge, more probably because

it was of a reasonably small area and had its two sides strongly defended by the steep slopes of two valleys, Thorns Clough to the west and Brun Clough to the east (strangely the same name as the Brun Clough that gave its name to that fatal battle, Brunanburgh).

To start at the upper end where the Ridge runs out into the main hill just below the Floating Light, we have Dry Bridge. This has given its name to a house, but the actual dry bridge must have been 60 yards or so lower down the road. To the west side at this point there is a spectacular ditch, obviously artificial, running down the very steep hillside to the remains of Deanhead Mill. Exactly opposite this ditch on the other side of the road is a swampy patch of land from which runs a minor tributary to the Brun Clough. Either the trickle of water has cut for itself a disproportionately deep channel with a steep bank to the south, or it has had some human help from the defenders of the fort.

The original road, which may well be the prehistoric one, runs from Thurstons to Dry Bridge a little to the west of the present (1790) road. No doubt the making of the new road, and some considerations of agricultural convenience, led to the filling in of the link between these two defences, and so removed for some yards the continuity of the fortification and the need for a bridge. At the time we are considering the trench would continue right across the ridge and the dry bridge would of course carry the old road over it. There are vague signs on the top of the hill a little to the south of Dry Bridge of excavations which may have been defensive and which, along with the main ditch, would explain the name Warrock Hill.

The two sides of Harrop Ridge are adequately defended by the steep slopes down to the Brun Clough for almost its whole length, and of Thorns Clough for about half its length. We then have gentler slopes at the south end and part of the south-west side, which needed some artificial defences. From Harrop Green a ridge can be traced running north-west across the fields, continuing on the other side of the 1790 road towards a place with the suggestive name of Bank Gap. It would logically need to continue, and may possibly be traced in the line of a hedge running further north past Yew Tree till it could end at the foot of the steep Warrock Hill. This ridge, now modified by the storms of 1,000 years and by several hundred years of cultivation, could well be the surviving trace of a very considerable ditch and rampart. My father had a trial trench dug across it at a point near Harrop Green. The only significant item was a strip of small flat stones behind the higher side of the ridge, such as might have been laid by men sent to occupy the rampart in wet weather. The owner of the land at the time was not co-operative and only allowed a minimum of digging. My own account of it is of a memory of about fifty years ago.

My father's notes mention traces of a similar ridge to the east side of Harrop Green, but I have not been able to identify this. It is only a short distance to the steep side of Brun Clough and this continuation would be a logically necessary part of the whole scheme. It may even be that some agricultural levelling has taken place since my father saw it.

I should mention that the bottoms of both valleys show remains in abundance of mills, reservoirs and artificial water courses, but all at a lower level than any of the defensive works I have been trying to describe.

Harrop Ridge is not the only approach to the vital pass of Standedge: there remains the possibility of an approach - in fact, an easier approach - by Harrop Edge. My father had apparently not seen, nor have I, any signs of entrenchment on the top of the ridge. But there remains the old Roman Camp.

Nearly every field in England has, or has had, its own name, not less in Saddleworth than elsewhere. The two camps are referred to in old deeds as Little Husteads (the inner camp) and Great Husteads (the outer one). These are not names handed on from the Roman occupation, or even from some temporary Romano-British occupation after the fort was abandoned. They are Teutonic names, whether Saxon or Danish, and imply a Saxon or Danish use of the areas. It seems impossible that any Roman buildings (which we know were not substantial) could have existed for the 800 years since the Romans left them. Yet we find the two areas described as "site of houses".

My father's theory was that during the time of tension between Mercia and Northumbria garrisons took over the forts and erected accommodation of sorts where the main body of the local forces could be housed. No doubt at the same time the partially flattened ramparts would be repaired. My father even suggested that the outer or larger fort might have been not repaired but newly constructed by the Northumbrian garrison. So far the excavations seem to have produced no evidence against this - rather evidence in favour, since the techniques of construction of the two ramparts show a considerable difference. The idea of considerable repairs is certainly plausible and the idea of a new Northumbrian fort, built to accommodate a larger garrison than the small Roman fort, is by no means impossible.

We cannot ignore, in looking through the darkness to see what may have happened, the existence of the only other old fort in the district, Buckton Castle. There is little guidance among the authorities on earthworks, except that it is certainly not one of the family of stone age or later hill towns that show their vast ditches on the tops of the chalk hills in South England. Buckton has never been sufficiently excavated to produce much evidence of its age or origin. The nearest forts - not necessarily comparable - are Mouselow near Glossop, and Almondbury, which I understand are both regarded as being pre-Roman. Buckton with its commanding position, and with the deep Carr Brook valley almost vertically below it, is admirably placed to deny the use of the old Mottram-Saddleworth road; no doubt it was built for that purpose, and the Northumbrians would no doubt occupy it as long as they could for exactly that purpose. In that case they probably repaired it, or in the absence of any evidence they may even have constructed it.

This period of tension, and of occasional war-like activities, would probably start a few years after Brunanburgh - say 940 - and last until the arrival of a Danish King of England on the scene in 1016. Canute would no doubt, in the absence of other considerations, have been favourably disposed to the Danes and Norsemen who for 200 years had been the effective rulers of Northumbria. But in his new role as King of England he would not be likely to countenance civil war. So for 70 years we can imagine frequent attempts to win back that part of Northumbria which has since been South Lancashire, small scale fighting which finds no place in history books, fought generally not by the main forces of either Northumbria or Mercia, but rather by local frontier forces, and we can see how necessary it was to keep a garrison near Standedge, how the old and new Castleshaw may have housed this garrison for varying periods during those 70 years, and how the name Husteads came to be applied to the forts.

We have no idea how often the Northumbrians succeeded in advancing or how far they went, how many times they were driven, whether to the line I have suggested as covering their observation posts or further back or even to the key fortress of Harrop Ridge. But we can conclude from the unique remains of defensive positions, and from the miraculously preserved place names, that the struggle went on and came to rest eventually not so far behind the outpost

line. We can imagine Canute, on his legendary, but not very probable, journey through Saddleworth, putting a stop to the fighting and insisting on a recognisable boundary roughly on the line where the fighting had stopped, which could be respected and if need be enforced by the Royal authority. And if this conjecture is right it would be from Canute's time and with Canute's authority, that the meticulous description of the boundaries of Saddleworth must date, the descriptions that we find repeated 200 or 300 years later in the deeds of the Stapletons.

The new line is not so strong as the suggested outpost line. This final line is indefensible at Shadworth Lane, barely defensible along the valley from Mossley to Grotton, and only reasonably strong from there to Strinesdale. But the stronger line further forward may well have played its part in breaking many counter-attacks during these 70 years.

The area of Saddleworth and Quick was left in Northumbrian hands, and when William the Conqueror only some 50 years later distributed lands to his supporters he gave it as it was already held - the Saxons or Danes who held land to the east and a small area to the West of Standedge handed it all over together to the new man. The Conqueror had no time to bother with watersheds!

We are now leaving the realms of conjecture. Saddleworth retained its existence, and its boundaries with only minor alterations, till the activities of the Boundaries Commission transferred it to Greater Oldham (part of Greater Manchester) only a couple of years ago. But the Church, in its greater wisdom, had in 937 drawn the boundary of the diocese of Lichfield as the same line as that of the Earldom of Mercia, along the watershed of Standedge. And there it has stayed ever since, as boundary, as time went on, of the succeeding dioceses of Chester and Manchester.

The older ones of us will continue to live in Saddleworth in Yorkshire. Later generations will forget Yorkshire. But they may be interested to have an explanation, conjectural but I hope probable, of why their ancestors lived for a thousand years in Yorkshire on the wrong side of the hill - and at the same time in a diocese which had nothing to do with Yorkshire.

G.B. Howcroft.

SADDLEWORTH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
CHRONOLOGICAL NOTES

Part 18: 1917

- Jan. War Savings Groups formed in many places.
Pig Keeping Scheme decided upon by Council to use waste from green-grocers.
- Mar. Wharmton Tower Military Hospital: 30 more beds to be provided.
- Apr. "Swealing" of chimneys after dark prohibited by police.
- May Smaller edition of Oldham Chronicle begun.
- June Accident at Wool Road. Heavily laden motor waggon lost control and crashed into wall of Police Station. Driver badly injured.
- July Award of Victoria Cross to Springhead soldier.
- Sept. Closure of Grasscroft Station by Railway Co. although there were 100 contract holders. Deputation of councillors to wait upon Railway Co. to protest.
- Nov. Ploughing of land in Saddleworth by Army.
- Nov. War Produce Show at Delph.
- Nov. Profit on growing corn in the district reported to be £39 in 1917.
- Nov. Maximum price of coal and meat fixed by local Food Control Committee.
- Nov. Anthrax reported at Saddleworth farm.

Compiled by Mrs. H. Wood.

Part 19: 1918, will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin.

MANOR RECORDS.

Part 2: 1792

31st May 1792

At a Meeting held this day at the House of Mr. Benjamin Lawton of Dobcross within the parish of Saddleworth, Innkeeper, to take into consideration certain Articles of Agreement entered into the 25th day of June last past BETWEEN the Trustees of the late James Farrer Esquire deceased of the one part, and John Radcliffe of Stonebreaks, merchant, James Harrop of Grasscroft, clothier, John Andrew the younger of Foulrakes, clothier, William Shaw of Furlane, clothier, and Thomas Harrop of Dobcross, clothier, of the other part, for the Sale of the Manor or Lordship or reputed Manor or Lordship of Saddleworth cum Quick in the West Riding of the County of York, together with the Commons, Moors, Wastes, Courts, free Routes, Rights, Royalties, Members Privileges, and Appurtenances whatsoever to the same belonging - AND ALSO for the Sale of several Messuages or Tenements with the Outbuildings Closes and Parcels of Land and Appurtenances to the same belonging, as in the said Articles are particularly mentioned and described, which said Manor and Estates are thereby mentioned to be conveyed and Assured unto and to the use of the said John Radcliffe, James Harrop, John Andrew, William Shaw and Thomas Harrop and the several other persons who had then executed, or who should on or before the first day of September next, execute certain Articles of Agreement bearing date the 15th day of June then Instant, it was resolved as follows, to wit

RESOLVED that the said several Conveyances shall be made to the whole 31 persons who executed the said Articles of Agreement as aforesaid, AS JOINT TENANTS, so as their several and respective Wives shall not be intitled to Dower in case of the Death of any of the said 31 persons.

RESOLVED that the above-named Mr. John Radcliffe shall write to Mr. Dawson Attorney at Law in Doncaster to draw Drafts of the said Conveyance in manner and form above mentioned and to send the same Drafts to him so drawn as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that James Buckley write to the different persons concerned in this Business to pay their respective Shares of the Money for the Purchase of Commons Waste Lands &c. on or before the 30th day of June next to Mr. John Radcliffe, being three Pounds an Acre.

James Buckley (Chairman).

28th June 1792

At a Meeting held this day at the House of Mr. Benjamin Lawton of Dobcross, Innkeeper, to consider the Propriety of the Drafts prepared by Mr. Dawson for the Conveyance of the Manor of Quick or Saddleworth and the several Estates therein mentioned.

RESOLVED that the said Draft be immediately returned to Mr. Dawson together with Mr. Lloyd's Opinion and Observations thereon with Instructions to alter the same Drafts as pointed out by Mr. Lloyd then to be forthwith ingrossed.

RESOLVED that Mr. Mellor of Ashton underline Attorney at Law be appointed to prepare Drafts of a Deed (as pointed out by Mr. Lloyd) for the 31 persons to declare that the said Manor and Estates were Conveyed to them IN TRUST for themselves and the several other persons who have executed Articles of Agreement, dated the 20th day of November last past whereby they agree to pay their several and respective Shares and proportions of the purchase Money for the same Manor and Estates, and that such Draft when drawn shall be laid before Mr. Lloyd to be by him perused and settled.

RESOLVED that each and every person and persons who have submitted Articles of Agreement for that purpose shall pay their respective parts and shares of the purchase Money to Mr. John Radcliffe of Stonebreaks on or before the 9th day of July next, in Cash - York Bank, Pontefract Bank or Bank of England Notes, or good London Bills having not more than 21 Days to run.

RESOLVED that the said Mr. John Radcliffe and Mr. Mellor shall attend the Trustees of the late Mr. Farrer, the Vendors of the said Manor and Estates, to pay the purchase money aforesaid and receive the Deeds.

(Signed by 44 proprietors).

13th September 1792

At a Meeting held at the House of Mrs. Bottomley, Innkeeper, it was agreed as follows -

1st. That Messrs. John Radcliffe of Stonebreaks, John Harrop of Dobcross, Thomas Shaw of Upper-mill, John Andrew of Foulrakes and John Buckley of Tunstead be appointed to receive the Rents of the Estates (and compel the same to be settled immediately), to receive the purchase Money for the Estates

sold, and if necessary to compel the said purchasers to complete the same.

2nd. That they shall give Notice for a Sale by Auction of the remainder of the Estates and also the Commons and Waste Lands lying and being on High-Moor and Wharmton, which Sale shall be made on the 11th day of October next, at the House of Benjamin Lawton of Dobcross, Innkeeper.

3rd. That the money received from time to time for Estates Commons or Waste Lands and Rents shall be paid into the Hands of the said Committee by them to be placed in the Hands of Messrs. Samuel and William Jones & Co. Bankers in Manchester there to be kept at Interest until it appears proper to a General Meeting that a Dividend shall be made.

4th. That Mr. Joseph Mallor of Ashton underline, Attorney at Law, and Mr. James Buckley of Tunstead Yeoman be appointed Stewards to Transact the business under the direction of the said John Radcliffe, John Harrop, Thomas Shaw, John Andrew and John Buckley.

5th. That the said John Radcliffe, John Harrop, etc. shall adopt such measures as appears to them most eligible for the recovering and enforcing payment from such proprietors of the Manor &c. as have neglected to pay their respective Shares.

(Signed by 30 proprietors).

N.B. There was a Meeting on the 11th October and several parcels of Land on High-Moor and Wharmton were sold agreeable to the 2nd Resolution above mentioned but no Resolutions were then entered into.

H.B.

8th November 1792

At a Meeting of the Gentlemen who have purchased the Manor of Saddleworth together with the Estates connected therewith, it is mutually agreed by between and amongst them, as follows -

RESOLVED that Mr. James Lees of Knothill be employed to Measure plan and lay out in Lots all the unsold and uninclosed Commons and Waste Lands belonging to the Manor of Saddleworth and that he be requested to have a Map thereof ready to be presented to a Meeting of the Proprietors on or before the 1st of June 1793.

RESOLVED that the Proprietors shall forthwith enter into a Contract with Benjamin Lawton of Dobcross to convey so much of the Waste Land upon Harrop Edge as lies on the North Side of the Road leading from Dobcross to Marsden, and which extends from Long-lanehead to the top of his Enclosed Land leaving sufficient Room for the Roads, the said Benj. Lawton paying the said Proprietors the Sum of Twenty Pounds per Acre or after that Rate for the same.

RESOLVED that Mr. Henry Whitehead and Joshua Radcliffe shall have that part of the Common the said Joshua Radcliffe has formerly inclosed lying to the South of the Road leading from Dobcross to Standedge after the Rate of £20 per Acre, permitting the said Joshua Radcliffe to take the Stone to his own use that he had used for the Walls.

RESOLVED that Mr. Samuel Bentley shall have the privilege of Water running on the Waste from Boarshurst to Foulrakes for 50 Guineas that is to say, such privilege as belongs of the Manor to be paid for on or before the day when the

Lots of Common on Wharmton are to be paid for.

RESOLVED that Mr. Giles Shaw of Furlane shall have that part of the Waste lying between his fence and the Road from Furlane up Hall Clough towards Know-top after the Rate of £20 per Acre.

RESOLVED that Mr. John Whitehead of Manchester shall have all the unsold Estates belonging to the said Manor except Briggs Cottage at such price as that the present Rents will pay him £3-15s. per cent per annum for his money. And also that he shall have the Water Privilege on the Waste below Mr. John Buckley's Engine in Tunstead Clough for £30.

RESOLVED that all the places that are sold this day shall be paid for on the 11th July 1793.

(Signed by 26 proprietors).

Witness

James Buckley.

James Lees.

To be continued.

SOCIETY SCRAPBOOK

This section of the Bulletin is to record items of general interest, discoveries, sources of reference, etc., which, although of no direct connection to any project being undertaken by the Society at the present time, may be relevant in the future.

Beach Bridge, Uppermill

An item in the "Reporter" of 16 October, 1886, reads as follows:

"The ceremony of opening Beach Bridge took place on Wednesday last, before a large and respectable company. The bridge spans the river Tame, and is made of the best iron in all its parts ...

A small procession of medical doctors, bakers and mungo dealers passed over and all paid toll to Thomas Shaw, Esq. of St. Chad's, Saddleworth, who has been at the expense of erecting the structure, and who, we learn, is going to throw open the same, very shortly, to all Her Majesty's subjects".

Is this a reference to the bridge across the river on Bridge Street, which gave access to Rush Hill?

Mrs. H. Wood.

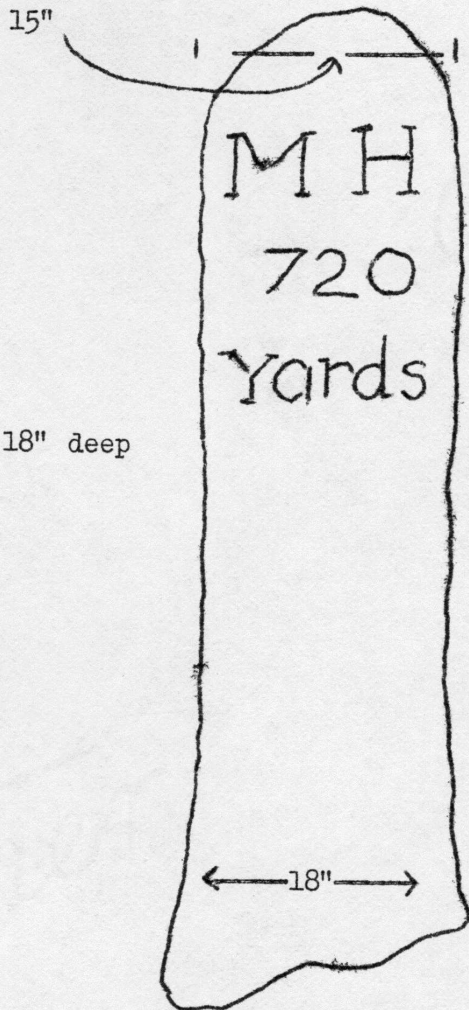
Engraved Stone lying near the old coach road on Standedge

In 1966-67 one of the earliest projects the Society undertook was the tracing of the line of the Roman Road between Castleshaw and Slack. At that time the "Pule Hill route" was strongly favoured, and during field work a group of members, which included Harry Day, Society Treasurer, came across the engraved stone illustrated below lying in the bed of a stream which runs into Redbrook reservoir on Standedge.

The stone can still be seen, lying on its back on the upstream side of the cutting eroded by a stream through the grass track of the second turnpike road, at map reference SE.027094.

One theory is that "MH" refers to the Manchester and Huddersfield Railway, as the site of the stone is roughly 700 yards from the line of the railway tunnel under Standedge. Redbrook reservoir is a canal feeder reservoir, and the Huddersfield Canal Company was bought by the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway Company in 1844. However, if the stone had any connections with the railway or canal, the lettering would surely have been "HM" and not "MH" as engraved.

A second theory is that the stone is the Obelisk referred to in "The Canals of North West England", V.2, p.335, by C. Hadfield and G. Biddle. The Huddersfield Canal Company were so exhilarated with the prosperity of their business that in 1824 they ordered "that an obelisk be erected at the place where the Turnpike Road on Standedge crosses the line of the tunnel ... with a suitable inscription thereon", at a cost not exceeding £20, later raised to £50. Again this theory can be faulted because of the distance the stone lies from the canal tunnel and because the lettering does not make sense.



Approx. 5' high.

Readers may like to submit their own theories in "Letters to the Editor".

David Chadderton.

JOSHUA HOBSON

A Huddersfield Radical Leader

Part 2

Chartism had its origins in London because there was a nucleus of literate, intelligent working men. The Stamp Duties still officially hampered the Radical papers but many were published and their publishers were fined. Hetherington, publisher of "The Poor Man's Guardian", Watson, who published "The Working Man's Friend", William Lovett and John Cleave formed with others the London Working Men's Association for Benefitting Politically, Socially and Morally the Useful Classes in 1836. Originally the men had met to pay the fines of the convicted publishers and out of these meetings the Association was

born. In 1837 it presented the House of Commons with a petition which contained Six Points which were afterwards adopted by Lovett's "People's Charter". The Six Points were:

Universal Manhood Suffrage	No property qualifications
A secret ballot	Equal electoral representation
Paid Members of Parliament	Annual Parliaments.

The Association joined forces with the Birmingham Political Union and in 1838 Lovett drafted his Charter.

Feargus O'Connor had been refused membership of the London Association and had moved to Leeds, where he organised support for the Charter in the North. Chartism was strongly supported in the West Riding because of the decay of handloom weaving and the rise of the factory which was an important sector of Chartist activity. The West Riding, too, depended solely on the woollen trade in one or other of its forms, and it had the ready-made organisations which were Radically-inclined.

Leeds was the centre for Radicalism in the West Riding. In 1819 an Association to the Friends of Radical Reform had been established, and this group met in a room at Union Court where they read the Radical papers of the day. In 1829 the Leeds Radical Reform Association organised a mass meeting at Hunslet Moor and invited Cobbett to lecture. They carried on an enthusiastic campaign for universal suffrage, the secret ballot and annual parliaments. The Radical Political Union was created in 1831, and 1837 saw the formation of the Leeds Working Men's Association. The latter drew the various agitating groups, the Short Time Committee, the Trades Unions, the Owenites and the Co-operative movement together.

Before the decision was made to form the Leeds Working Men's Association, a meeting, to be chaired by Joshua Hobson, had been convened on Woodhouse Moor. Cleave and Vincent from the London Working Men's Association had spoken and had urged the formation of a similar Society. A committee was formed which included Joshua Hobson and William Rider, formerly secretary of the Radical Political Union. The newly formed Association adopted the Six Points of the People's Charter, five of which (payment for M.P's was excluded) had been the programme of the Leeds Radical Association in 1835.

Against this background Hobson's political activities were manifested. He was an active Radical all his life, a prominent Chartist, and latterly he was concerned with social welfare through the medium of the Municipal Improvements Acts under which the Huddersfield Improvement Act was passed in 1848. Hobson became associated with politicians and agitators in Huddersfield who were not content with the passing of "the Bill, the whole Bill and nothing but the Bill" which the supporters of reform thought would quite answer the case.

Under the Reform Act, Huddersfield had become a Parliamentary Borough, returning one member. The orthodox Whig element was very strong in the town and it was arranged by these reformers that the influence of Sir John Ramsden, the Lord of the Manor, should over-ride all others and make Huddersfield into a pocket-borough. The first Parliamentary candidate was Charles Ramsden, a relative of Sir John's, who was supported by many influential reformers. His supporters had, however, not taken into account the tremendous influence of the non-voters who rallied at the adoption and declared against the candidature of Ramsden who had to leave the town somewhat precipitately.

In December 1832 a Captain Fenton of Spring Grove was the Whig candidate and a Captain Joseph Wood stood for the Radicals. Fenton simply pledged his support for Earl Grey and the Government while Wood was in favour of extending the franchise and reforming the Reform Act. His election banner carried the words "The Voice of the People is the Voice of God. Wood, the unbought representative of an unbought people. Pledge yourself to the Ten Hours Bill, we will have no shuffling. Your franchise is only a trust; then vote for Wood, the man of the people". In spite of this exhortation, Wood polled 152 votes and Fenton was returned as M.P. for Huddersfield with 263 votes. During the two days of the poll there was rioting in Huddersfield, windows were broken at Fenton's house at Spring Grove, the George Inn and the public buildings. The cavalry was called and the Riot Act read before the crowds dispersed.

Joshua Hobson had, by this time, set up a printing press in the Swan Yard, the home of the Huddersfield Political Union. Funds to buy press and type were not forthcoming, so Hobson built the press himself and sufficient money was raised to buy type. The election produced the usual pamphlets, two of which were printed and published by Hobson. The first was "The Woodites Forget-me-Not - being a sketch of a new political farce called the 'Whig-tom-foolery' election, and first acted in the Borough of Huddersfield by 415 out of a population of 20,000, when Captain Fenton, the nominee of Byram House (the Ramsden seat) was returned by a nominal majority as their representative in opposition to Captain Wood, the man of the people" - by an observer. The second was a political broadside entitled "Who does Captain Phantom represent?"

A Dr. Chalmers, who visited Huddersfield in June 1833, saw the Factory Commissioners, an unpopular Factory Master and Captain Fenton burned in effigy in the Market Place.

In 1833 Hobson decided to publish a newspaper, in defiance of the Stamp Acts, which would act as a mouthpiece for the Huddersfield Political Union. This was to be called "The Voice of the West Riding" and the first edition appeared on 1st June 1833. Under the title the paper carried the slogan "For a Nation to be Free it is sufficient that she wills it" - Lafayette.

In this first edition there was "An Address to the Men of Huddersfield and their Brethren of the West Riding more especially those who have pledged themselves to join in the establishment of a Free Press".

"Any writing emanating from the Working Class and setting forth their rights and wrongs is sufficient to carry a verdict against it. To free themselves from this censorship they have to engage a printer in Manchester and other distant places. To redress this it is intended to establish a penny weekly paper called "The Voice of the West Riding" advocating the Rights of Man against the 'exclusives', the Rights of Labour against the 'Competitives' and the Political Economists, and especially to vindicate the Working Classes from the calumnies and misrepresentations of our parasitical scribes who figure in the Provincial Newspapers.

It is proposed to carry on this object by means of a donation and shares of 5/-. The pledged assistance of many friends in all the principal towns of the West Riding is very encouraging and doubtless your aid and influence will give such reinforcement and we shall soon silence our

enemies' batteries and carry their entrenchments by the dint of truth and moral power.

We are not influenced by pecuniary motives but by the good which we are sure will arise out of truth and moral rectitude. Therefore our cause is yours, it is the cause of humanity. In standing up for ourselves we defend our children. UP then, fellow operatives, rally round the standard of the Union. Swell the phalanx of your own ORDERS, let us reject the livery of sycophancy and win (or at least deserve) the Patriot's Wreath".

The paper was very outspoken particularly on the question of Factory Reform. Hobson feared no man. An item on the Factory Commission in the same edition reads:

"This precious knot of Briefless Lawyers and celebrated Physicians!! who can obtain no fees have for the last three weeks been actively engaged in Leeds collecting 'Further Evidence' from the Factory Masters to prove that they shall remain unmolested. The inhabitants of the West Riding are exhorted to PROTEST. PROTEST. PROTEST. Teach the Men 'wot wants more evidence' that you will no longer submit to have your children worked to DEATH".

"Advertisements not exceeding five lines inserted for 1/-. Two Pence per line afterwards. The reason why we insert them so very low is we have not to pay the 3/6 Duty nor Lord Althorn's system of changeable charges".

A fortnight later, the "Voice" carried an item on Factory Labour:

"One of those Hells on Earth not a mile from a cottage called the Wounded Hussar is at present grinding 14 hours and 20 minutes toil out of the poor helpless children employed therein, beginning at 5 in the morning - ten minutes for breakfast - dinner twenty and ten for drinking, leaving off at eight in the evening, and we understand the Tyrant craves another hour longer - to begin at Four in the morning!!"

On 6th August 1833 Hobson was convicted of publishing an unstamped newspaper, and he was sentenced to six months imprisonment at Wakefield Jail.

Anne Chadderton.

To be continued.

OLD SADDLEWORTH

This is part of the work being carried out on a Gazetteer of Saddleworth by the Historical Society. As more of this work is completed details will be published in future editions of the Bulletin. The information given below has been extracted from Record Cards which are held by the Society and which are available for reference.

OAKEN HILL

Grid Reference: SE 000102

- Location: On south-west facing spur (Oaken Hill) above the confluence of Oaken Lee Clough and Lee Clough, now the north-eastern corner of the Castleshaw Upper Reservoir, 900 feet above sea level.
- Description: Demolished when reservoirs built.
- History:
- 1747 18 Nov. John Shaw of Oakenhill clothier buried. (Registers).
 - 1750 25 Sept. John Gartside senior of Denshaw yeoman married Mary Shaw of Oakenhill widow. (Registers).
 - 1751 14 July. James Buckley of Oakenhill clothier married Sarah Shaw of Denshaw. Their daughter Sarah christened 8 Sept. 1751. Their son Robert christened 13 Oct. 1753. Their son John christened 15 Jan. 1758. Sarah wife of James Buckley died 1 Feb. 1759 aged 28. 6 Dec. 1761 James son of James Buckley clothier and Anne his wife of Oakenhill christened. Their son John buried 21 Aug. 1763. Their daughter Deborah christened May 1763 and buried 24 Jan. 1764. Their daughter Jane christened 10 June 1764. Their son John christened 26 Aug. 1765 and buried 26 Mar. 1767. Their daughter Deborah christened 5 July 1767. Their daughter Dinah christened 27 Nov. 1768 and buried 8 Nov. 1769. Their daughter Anne christened 29 July 1770 and buried 18 Aug. 1771. James Buckley of Oakenhill died 25 Oct. 1802 aged 78 and Anne his second wife died 23 Jan. 1810 aged 84. (Registers).
 - 1752 29 Oct. Patience daughter of Jane Buckley of Oakenhill spinster by Edmund Buckley of Walters christened. (Registers).
 - 1753 12 Oct. Jane wife of James Buckley clothier of Oakenhill buried. James Buckley buried 17 Oct. 1753. (Registers).
 - 1753 18 Nov. Rebecca Buckley widow of Oakenhill buried. (Registers).
 - 1756 19 Apr. Dinah Taylor widow of Oakenhill buried. (Registers).
 - 1765 10 Aug. James Shaw clothier of Oakenhill buried. (Registers).
 - 1772 22 Nov. John son of Richard Bradbury clothier and Sarah his wife of Oakenhill christened. Their son James was christened 26 Feb. 1775. (Registers).
 - 1776 26 May. Sarah daughter of Robert Buckley clothier and Ann his wife of Oakenhill christened. (Registers).
 - 1781 1 Feb. John Hall of Oakenhill clothier married Mary Bentley of Standedge. (Registers).
 - 1785 28 Aug. John Kenworthy of Waters married Deborah Buckley of Oakenhill. Their son John christened 20 Nov. 1785. Deborah wife of John Kenworthy clothier of Oakenhill buried 24 Jan. 1786. (Registers).
 - 1786 25 June. James Whitehead son of Jane Buckley spinster of Oakenhill christened and buried 30 Mar. 1787. 28 Sept. 1786 James Whitehead of Water-coat married Jane Buckley of Oakenhill. (Registers).
 - 1788 22 May. Sarah daughter of John Wood clothier and Hannah his wife of Oakenhill christened. (Registers).

- 1837 The West Riding Poll Book listed M. Hirst of Oakenhill.
 1851 Peggy Hirst lived here according to the Census, together with two sons. She was a farmer of 128 acres, and her two sons were employed as agricultural labourers.
 1871 According to the Census there were two cottages inhabited. One by Hannah Broadbent with five males. She was a charwoman and three of the males were woollen piecers. In the other cottage lived George Clarke, who was a shepherd living alone.

OAKENHILL LEE

Grid Reference: SE 003104

- Location: South-west facing spur (Oaken Hill) at north-eastern end of Castleshaw Valley, between Oaken Lee Clough and Lee Clough, and just below the moor edge 1060 feet above sea level.
- Description: Demolished when reservoirs built.
- History: 1762 8 Aug. John son of Mary Lees of Oakenhill-lee christened, base born. (Registers).
 1782 4 Apr. Alice wife of Benjamin Gartside clothier of Oakenhill-lee buried aged 61. Benjamin Gartside yeoman of Moorbank late of Oakenhill-lee buried 8 May 1795 aged 79. 5 Oct. 1715 Benjamin Gartside son of John Gartside christened. (Registers).
 1787 25 Nov. Joseph son of Samuel Shaw clothier and Mally his wife of Oakenhill-lee christened. (Registers).
 1789 21 May. Ann wife of Joseph Shaw clothier of Oakenhill-lee buried. (Registers).
 1813 15 Jan. Benjamin Gartside junior of Oakenhill-lee died aged 66 and Mary his wife died 12 Aug. 1802 aged 51. (Registers).
 1838 11 Oct. Radcliffe Whitehead of Oakenhill Lee died aged 66 and Betty his wife died 17 Aug. 1845 aged 70. 20 June 1793 Radcliffe Whitehead married Betty Wood. (Registers).
 1851 According to the Census John Whitehead, joiner and farmer of 41 acres lived here with five males and two females, one of whom was an agricultural labourer.
 1871 The Census listed Joseph Henshaw of Oakenhill Lee, Farmer, with three males and two females. One of these was employed as a warp sizer, and one as a woollen hand-loom weaver.

RAGSTONE

Grid Reference: SD 993118

- Location: On south-facing spur between Dowry Water and a small tributary (Broad Greave Clough), not far from the Huddersfield Road. On the edge of Denshaw Moor, 1180 feet above sea level.
- Description: Now demolished, though site of house can be plainly seen.
- History: 1835 Church Rate Book lists two occupiers: John Fielding (owner John Radcliffe), and Josiah Swithinbank (and owner).
 1851 According to the Census the occupiers were: Joseph Radcliffe, landed proprietor, who lived alone, and John Lawton, a farmer of 21 acres and shepherd, who lived with one male and two females.
 1852 The Church Rate Book listed John Lawton as occupier with Joseph Shaw occupying the land.
 1871 The Census listed Joseph Kenworthy (aged 38) farmer of 20 acres and Michael his brother (aged 34) as occupiers.
 1888 Joseph Radcliffe (Joe o' th' Radstones), the Saddleworth recluse, was found dead at his house at Ragstones. (See Ammon Wrigley, "Saddleworth Chronological Notes", p.75, and "Songs of a Moorland Parish" for a description of Radcliffe).

The Society would welcome any further information on the houses and hamlets mentioned here, and on any other property of possible interest in Saddleworth. The Gazetteer will also encompass turnpike roads, canals, railways, bridges, etc. Information should be sent to the Editor of the Bulletin:

Mr. B. Barnes,
7, Elsted Road,
Greenfield,
OLDHAM OL3 7LL.

Enquiries about membership of the Society should be sent to the Secretary:

Mrs. B. Booth,
"Ceann",
Friezland Lane,
Greenfield,
OLDHAM.
