

# Saddleworth White Rose Society in the County of York

Newsletter 49

## SWRS AGM

After opening the SWRS AGM at the Masonic Lodge, 18<sup>th</sup> Nov and introducing the committee and himself, Mr Geoff Bayley the SWRS Chairman then introduced the speaker, Mr Michael Fox in order to fit everything in most efficiently. Mr Fox's talk about places of interest in Saddleworth was thoroughly enjoyed by all, as was evidenced by the many favourable comments made and pleasant reminiscences heard from many of the older Saddleworthians after the meeting.

The talk was followed by an excellent potato pie or cheese pie supper, depending on preferences and prepared by Mr Ian Siddlow of the Masonic Hall. As usual, absolutely first class.

The formal part of the meeting then took place, when the officers and committee were re-elected en bloc with the exception of Mrs Norma Gregory our very competent and efficient treasurer who has decided to step down for the present, and Mrs Angela Sykes who was co-opted onto the committee during the year and has now been elected and taken up her permanent position thereon.

**A decision was made, by the full meeting to increase membership from £3 to £5 for single members, from £5 to £8 for family membership (max 2 adults) and to £8 corporate membership. Those who have already paid for 2010/11 will not be expected to pay the difference.**

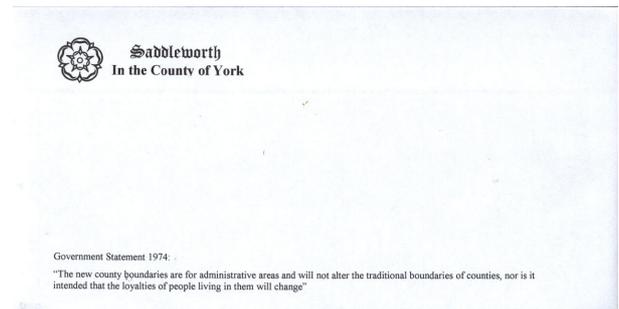
## Royal Mail and County addresses

The Royal Mail have decided not to include county addresses in future. So, what difference will this make? I would assume none whatever. I believe it to be irrelevant as many of the addresses used by Royal Mail are geographically incorrect administrative addresses, not True Historical County names. Saddleworth mail for example comes incorrectly addressed with the name of the village followed by Oldham and sometimes even Lancashire. This of course is completely incorrect and is supposedly done because Oldham, Lancashire is the Saddleworth Post Town and also, it is claimed, to suit Royal Mails sorting system. However, Royal Mail is not the law and cannot

Autumn 2010

dictate where people live, or their addresses. There is nothing to stop anyone from using their True Historic County as part of their real geographical address.

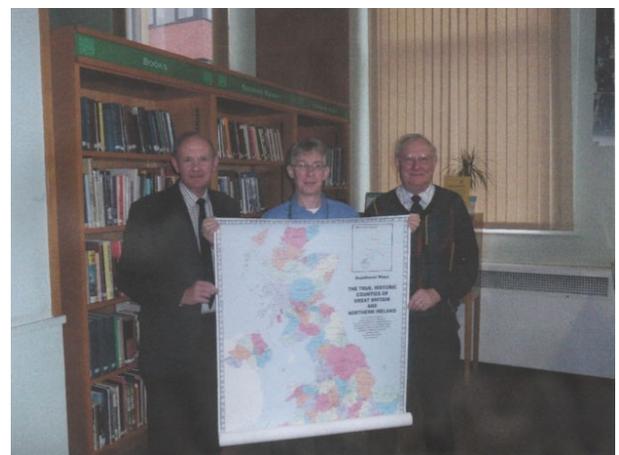
## Tell the World where you really live



Why not use SWRS printed envelopes and tell the world where you really live. Saddleworth is in Yorkshire and the county boundary was not moved in 1974. Packs of 10 self sealing envelopes. 40p.

## Presentation of a map of the true counties of Gt Britain & Northern Ireland

The photograph below shows Mr G Bayley Chairman and Mr M Hall Vice Chairman SWRS, handing the map "The True Historic Counties of Gt. Britain and N Ireland" and explanatory booklet, produced by SWRS with text from Quadhurst. to Mr Roger Ivans, Curator of the Borough Local Studies Library.



## QUADHURST MAPS

*We recently purchased a map of the true Historic Count boundaries of Gt Britian and N Ireland We feel that the information supplied with this map, is so important that it should be made available to every member of SWRS and others who are interested. And so with the kind permission of Quadhurst we have included this information in this Newsletter.*

### The True Historic Counties of Gt. Britian & Northern Ireland

#### Introduction

Everyone has a sense of their geographical identity. Our countries divisions go back to mediaeval and feudal times and in England to at least before the Norman Conquest; and traditionally it is not only the town or village where one was born that gave one their sense of geographical identity but the county in which they were born. Geographical identities are fixed and inviolable.

People are traditionally very proud of and fiercely loyal to the county in which they were born or grew up. Ask any Yorkshire man.

The UK has 92 counties, (England 40;Scotland 34; Wales 1; Northern Ireland 6) Their boundaries though not scientifically mapped until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, were known by all and well recorded.

Our historic counties are as real and enduring as they have been for centuries. Unfortunately that's not what most people, including our map makers and media, realise. It is that sad fact that has cried out for this map to be created.

#### First and last

The first and only legislative change to geographic county boundaries came about by the Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844, which attempted to tidy up a large number of very small enclaves of neighbouring counties that were completely physically detached from their parent county. For example, the Island of Lindisfarne, geographically in Northumberland was, in fact, in the historic County of Durham. Many of these detached parts had come about through feudal or religious circumstances. This act did not abolish all detached parts of counties: many counties such as Worcestershire, Banffshire and Flintshire retained their detached parts. A very important point to bear in mind is that the 1844 act was the first and last piece of legislation that changed by statute our historic county boundaries.

#### First accurate mapping

The first nationwide, large scale mapping of county boundaries was carried out by the Ordnance Survey in it's 1 inch first series of maps starting in 1805. However, it is generally accepted that some of the boundaries cannot be relied upon; and so it was the first series 6 inch maps, produced between c.1845 and c.1889 that are widely acknowledged to be the definitive documentation and source of our historic county boundaries.

So if there has been no change to our historic, geographical county boundaries for 165 years, why is there no modern map in existence showing these counties – our most enduring and fixed cultural and geographical sub-national reference we have? Read on...

#### The thin end of the wedge

In the late 1880's(Local Government Act 1888 [England and Wales] & Local Government [Scotland] Act 1889), our modern system of local government was introduced and at it's highest level created county councils whose boundaries were those of the historic counties. County borough councils, geographically within these new county council areas but politically independent from them, were created for our largest cities and enjoyed the same status as the county councils. Historic counties were explicitly unaffected and became separate geographical entities even though there borders were the same (but see next paragraph) Beneath the county councils and county boroughs sub-structures such as municipal boroughs, urban districts and rural districts were created; a broadly similar system in Scotland was introduced. This set the scene for the confusion that has mounted ever since because the term "administrative county and "historic county" because the boundaries of each entity were the same – initially.

Only two significant changes occurred in terms of new administrative counties' relationship with the historic counties. The first one was the creation of the London County Council of the new administrative county of London. This was carved out of parts of Middlesex, Kent and Surrey. Secondly there was the amalgamation of Ross-shire and Cromertysire in the north of Scotland. Cromerty was a strange entity in that it had no main, exclusive geographical existence: instead it was made up of a number of exclaves within the county of Ross-shire. The new county council, therefore, became Ross and Cromerty.

#### The divergence begins

Two things then happened. Firstly county councils began to swap pieces of land either to make their administrative borders tidier; or borders were altered through councils acquiring neighbouring counties land for urban expansion (e.g. Bristol, Gloucestershire, south of the Avon into Somerset; Sheffield, Yorkshire into Derbyshire; and Birmingham, Warwickshire, westwards into Worcestershire and Staffordshire).

Secondly most administrative county councils began to absorb many remaining detached parts of counties, for example Worcestershire and Gloucestershire; and Aberdeenshire and Banffshire. Some counties, however, retained detached parts, notably, Flintshire and Huntingdonshire (and even Worcestershire retained Dudley as a detached exclave in Staffordshire until the early 1960's).

For a time the Ordnance Survey continued to map historic county boundaries; but a (fateful) decision was made in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to change the basis of mapping from historic county to administrative county. In 1917 this was also mirrored in parliamentary constituency boundaries, hitherto based on historic county borders, being re-drawn along and based upon administrative county boundaries.

#### The end of the beginning

Unintended complacency then set in for a number of decades simply because administrative county boundaries were still very closely aligned to historic county ones. By the end of the 1950's although many administrative county borders were certainly different in places from their historic counterparts, to all intents and purposes, the differences were not considered that important, certainly not to excite the map makers.

### The beginning of the end

All that started to change, firstly in the early 1960's with the establishment of the Greater London Council, which took a chunk of Essex, further large amounts from Kent, and Surrey and completely absorbed Middlesex; and then with the establishment of the new Huntingdon and Peterborough County Council taking the north eastern Soke of Peterborough from Northamptonshire and a small part of north western Cambridgeshire. This suddenly changed county borders in a very significant way and marked a beginning of what became a complete severance of the link between our historic and administrative counties. Reference to the historic counties still existed even though their use in any form of public administration had disappeared; the General Register Office continued to make a distinction ( and continued to report separately) between them and their administrative counterparts right up to the early 1970's.

### The really guilty one

The real damage, with which we are still living today (only it's even worse now), came with the (now) reviled Local Government Act of 1972 (*came into force in 1974*). This completely swept away the existing system of local government and so radically changed the administrative map that no longer could there be any claim of a close link to our historic counties. That act established new "counties" such as Humberside, Avon, Cleveland, West Midlands and Greater Manchester, it completely abolished the counties of Westmorland, Cumberland, Huntingdonshire and Rutland. It amalgamated Worcestershire with Herefordshire. Suddenly people living in a part of Lancashire woke up to find themselves told that they were now living in Yorkshire. In Scotland every single county was swept away in favour of massive new "regions". A similar thing happened in Wales with the establishment of counties such as Powys, Gwynedd and Dyfed.

### But read this next bit

But the most important- not yet appreciated – aspect of this piece of legislation was the explicit statement that these new administrative counties **DID NOT AFFECT OR ABOLISH OUR HISTORIC COUNTIES**. So that person who woke up in Yorkshire the morning after he went to bed in Lancashire actually did no such thing, only no one told him and millions like him. This clear and unambiguous statement was simply ignored when it came to both mapping and geographical references in the media. The problem with historic and administrative divergence that had not really been much of a problem at all prior to 1974 suddenly became a big problem indeed.

### A further turn of the screw

Further confusion and complication in the local government system in the 1990's came by the abolition of metropolitan "counties", "counties" such as Humberside, Avon and Cleveland (which was generally held to be A Good Thing) and the establishment of new "unitary authorities across the country. What was such A Bad Thing was perpetuating" – where such councils remained – calling them "shire county councils" where the boundaries of these local authority areas now bore absolutely no relation to the true historic county (e.g Monmouthshire and Denbighshire). Another perverse consequence of the 1990's changes can be seen in what happened to Berkshire. It was bad enough in 1974 for the administrative county of Berkshire to lose a massive chunk of it's northern area to Oxfordshire and the gaining of Slough

from Buckinghamshire to it's east was no compensation whatever ...). In the 1990's changes, all local authorities in what had been the post -'74 administrative county of Berkshire became unitary authorities; and Berkshire County Council ceased to exist – and so did Berkshire on all our maps, Gone! So a golden opportunity to right the wrongs of the 1972 act and restore our traditional county names and boundaries was not taken, and instead we are more confused than ever.

### The one that got away

Thanks to it's unique position in the government of the UK, Northern Ireland has largely escaped the chaos and damage that have been inflicted on the mainland. While it's local government has been reformed in much the same way as that on the mainland, there has never been any confusion caused with historic counties because the local government areas and their names have always been explicitly separate. As a result, you can still buy maps of Northern Ireland with their historic county borders well and truly intact. (In fact this is not strictly true because Belfast is historically in Co. Antrim but has extended it's sprawl into neighbouring Co. Down. The border is shown as deviating slightly from it's river-based line).

### Where we stand now and why this map is so important to have

We are now in danger of losing our geographical county heritage through a combination of local bad government law, a media misunderstanding of what has happened to our historical heritage, self-promoting local authorities erecting road signs at their borders, proudly announcing that you are welcome to South Gloucestershire (and many, many more like that), and those responsible for mapping the country still not getting excited about and not taking account of the now complete dissociation between administrative and historic county borders by continuing to recognise the former and completely ignore the latter. Any glance at a map of the "counties of Great Britain" will see nothing but a mass of administrative local government areas – and lots of them, too, some of which call themselves "counties", others which don't even try to do that. In total, all our maps and road atlases give the impression that this is our modern fixed geographical reference. It is not. Local government, by it's very nature is not, cannot be, constant or fixed. Moreover there is not one agreed standard of boundary delineation: the boundaries you find drawn in one atlas will not necessary be the same as in another. There is no modern map in existence which shows the enduring, historic counties of this country, until now – and that is why this map is so important. It is **unique** it is **cotemporary**; it is highly **accurate** for it's scale (borders drawn with precise detail taken from Ordnance Survey First Series 6-inch maps); it will help to put right the damage inflicted on our historic and *constant* popular geography by Whitehall bureaucrats and innocent, but unaware and uninformed, map and atlas makers.

**This not an historic map.** It is bang up to date . Our historic counties are today the same as they have been for hundreds of years. They have never been changed; they have never been abolished. This new map from Quadhurst Publications is the only one in **existence** that shows our historic counties in a modern, relatively large scale; accurate, striking and colourful image.

## VAO

Over the past several months SWRS have been co-operating with VAO (Voluntary Action Oldham) through Ms Liz Windser-Walsh and Mrs Jane Glasher-White in attempting to address the borough-wide problem of the misuse of the word Oldham, practised by all departments of the Boro Council and its numerous offshoots which causes much confusion and misunderstanding throughout the Boro. The logo that the Boro Council use for example is misleading and implies subjection by the other six townships of the Boro to the township of Oldham. The Boro Council is not Oldham Council as the logo suggests but a Metropolitan borough-wide council shared by all seven townships.

The majority of documents issued by the Boro Council and its offshoots continually use Oldham rather than (the Boro or Oldham Met Boro).

However, we are pleased that these two ladies of VAO have worked, co-operated and helped to try and rectify this incorrect use. We have seen a great improvement in the wording of VAO's Newsletters, where they are able to do so. Unfortunately, they are unable to change the names of organisations such as their own, which have been imposed by the Boro Council. The title of their organisation "Voluntary Action Oldham", is itself misleading. That organisation like many more whose titles have been imposed by the Boro Council are Boro-wide organisations covering all seven townships equally. A case in point, of this misuse is the logo on the Boro's refuse vehicles for example. "**Working for a greener Oldham**". What about the rest of the Boro? The vehicles are owned by the whole Boro and employed to make the whole Boro greener, not just Oldham and their cost is shared by the whole Boro. We would very much appreciate seeing all OMBC departments follow the good example of VAO.

### Apology for an error in Newsletter 48

I apologise for incorrectly stating that *Mrs Angela Sykes's stand at the Yorkshire Day event portrayed Mrs Sutherland's Music Festival and Yorkshire dialects from the Ridings*. This should have read **Mrs Sunderland's**. R Bardsley. sec.

### Saddleworth's Stone Walls

After much initial disagreement with OMBC, which eventually developed into constructive talks, we are now pleased to see a great visual improvement in the latest walling repairs, by the Borough Council, alongside Saddleworth's roads. It

is a compromise between real dry walling and what the Borough Council originally had in mind. Although not strictly speaking traditional dry stone walling, it looks far more acceptable than the eyesores previously erected. Some concrete has been used behind the walls, which would have been unnecessary had a *batter* been put on the sides and *through stones* used. However, we can understand why it is unfortunately necessary these days to mortar the headers (but not cement). From an appearance point of view it is a very neat and acceptable job.

### County Boundary Sign Fund

Although having received a good response so far, the White Rose Society is still requiring funds, from members and other interested parties, for the purchase of several more pairs of signs to mark our county boundary. **We wish to thank all who have donated so far. Unfortunately two who donated by letter, Mr A Shaw and Mr J.A.W. Clough, did not give their addresses.**

### The Lancashire flag flies on Boro Civic Centre

As promised by the local authority, the real Lancashire county flag flew from the boro Civic Centre in the township of Oldham on Lancashire Day 27<sup>th</sup> Nov, just as it should. The boundary between the County Palatine of Lancaster and the West Riding of Yorkshire is the only real county boundary. The admin area based in Preston, Lancs, which calls itself Lancashire County Council, is simply a bit of the County Palatine stuck onto a bit of the West Riding and therefore not totally in either county. It is commendable however that the OMB local authority acknowledges the true facts, in an area where, because of its complicated history, different heritage, urban/rural divide etc. caused by government imposed Council sharing since 1974, it is seen as tremendously important. The best way we believe, being to recognise and acknowledge the differences, not try to ignore them. A lot of hype has been put out by the media in trying to promote the "hairy-fairy" admin and former admin counties such as Cumbria, Gtr Manchester, Merseyside etc. A totally pointless and unnecessary exercise as there is absolutely no need for a real county or indeed a "Mickey Mouse county" to be an admin area, when a Unitary Authority is sufficient.

Country Women's meetings, last Wed of each month during 2011 except Aug & Dec. No details yet.

New contact details for SWRS secretary are :

Tel no. 01457 238 328.

e-mail [rbwhiterose@talktalk.net](mailto:rbwhiterose@talktalk.net) /  
[roybardsley@whiterose.saddleworth.net](mailto:roybardsley@whiterose.saddleworth.net)