



# Saddleworth White Rose Society

In the County of York

## Newsletter No 5 January 2000

### Red & White Roses's Meet at County End

Saddleworth White Rose Society helped the Friends of Real Lancashire, celebrate Lancashire day. This may seem an unusual activity for a White Rose Society but the reasons were two fold. The Society felt that we should in some way try to repay Friends of Real Lancashire for all the help, support and encouragement they have given us, since our formation. The ceremony also helped to increase public awareness and remind people of the fact that, the Lancashire - Yorkshire border still legally exists, where it has always been, at the appropriately named County End. It reiterated that the administrative counties such as Merseyside and Greater Manchester were created solely for the purpose of local government administration and in no other way altered the traditional and historical county boundaries.

So on Saturday 27 November 1999, Lancashire Day, a ceremony was held at the Yorkshire - Lancashire border. This was attended by: - councillor John Battye, Mayor of Oldham Metropolitan Borough, and Mrs Annette Battye, councillor Derek Heffernan, Chairman at Saddleworth Parish Council, Mr Chris Dawson, Chairman of FORL and Mrs Dawson, Mr and Mrs Russell, Mr and Mrs White also of FORL, Mr Colin Holt, Chairman of the Yorkshire Ridings Society and Mrs Holt, Mr Graham Tibbot, Chairman of SWRS, committee members of SWRS and representatives at Oak Dene Residential Home.



The proceedings began, just over the border in Lees, Lancashire, with Mr Dave Russell of FORL reading the Lancashire Proclamation. A message of support and encouragement was then read by Mr Graham Tibbot the SWRS Chairman, on behalf of the society. He then made a presentation of a hamper of Yorkshire Fayre, donated in part by The Yorkshire Classic Hamper Company, from Newport, East Riding of Yorkshire and in return Mr Russell presented SWRS with a bouquet of Lancashire Red Roses. Mr Chris Dawson, Chairman at FORL read a message of congratulation from the Queen. Mr Colin Holt, YRS Chairman, thanked him and called for three cheers to be raised for Her Majesty. He then presented red roses to Mrs Battye, from YRS, councillor Heffernan said a few words after which he presented a Yorkshire Pudding to the Mayor who very much appreciated the gesture but remarked that he would have liked some gravy with it. The Mayor then made a speech in which he acknowledged the fact that the county boundary splits Oldham Metropolitan Borough into two almost equal parts. The Yorkshire section at 53% being slightly larger.

The hamper of Yorkshire Fayre was later passed onto the residents of Oak Dene Residential Home at Lees, Lancashire and the Lancashire Red Roses were given to the residents of Woodend Residential Home, Springhead, Yorkshire, the recipients were highly delighted with their gifts.



The whole of the proceedings were conducted with the best of good humour, friendship and cordiality and even the policeman Constable Tranter, to whom we had all handed our guns and grenades, before the proceedings started, was born in Oldham but bred and reared in Saddleworth. He diplomatically wore both a red and a white rose; he was friendly, helpful and joined in the good humoured banter.

Finally we would like to thank Mr Clifford Smith and the stewards of Zion Methodist Church Lees for their kind hospitality and the use of their church hall and other facilities should the weather conditions have created a problem. However, in the event, the weather was very kind indeed for November and I believe everyone enjoyed the occasion.

Interestingly, the following morning the Leeds paparazzi, namely, Danny Savage of Radio Leeds, rang Mr Brian White of FORL and Mr Mike Buckley of SWRS for a live telephone, radio interview. They were asked to explain their fraternisation and warned not to get too friendly and not to forget that they are sworn enemies. Both Brian and Mike handled the cross-examination and grilling very well and gave both groups some excellent publicity.

### **Victory for Craven**

The ancient British territory of Craven stood united through Saxon and Norman Conquest and the war of the roses. However, in 1974 Whitehall bureaucrats, at the stroke of a pen, set aside 1500 years of history and consigned half of Craven to the new administrative Lancashire County and the other half to West Yorkshire. Like the Saddleworth White Rose Society, the Unite Craven campaign, have been lobbying to have Craven's historic unity recognised and its true Yorkshire boundaries marked.

An article in the Times of January 10th announces a victory for the campaign group. The Times article reports that "Lancashire County Council has bowed to pressure and recognised that the changes affected only administrative boundaries and were never meant to alter the historic borders of the Ridings, nor people's county loyalties". Furthermore the "officials have now agreed that county boundary signs can be erected on roads crossing the old border".

The article goes on to say that the Unite Craven group plans to erect four signs on the A65, A59, A682 and B6251 the main routes crossing the boundary. Although the County Council has refused to pay for these signs, they have granted permission, provided they are built of stone and are sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and architecture.

The Yorkshire Riding Society will pay for one of the signs and the Unite Craven campaign has begun an appeal to pay for the rest. British Waterways has also expressed interest in putting a boundary marker on the towpath of the Leeds - Liverpool Canal.

We congratulate the Unite Craven campaign on their achievement and in setting an important precedent. Saddleworth White Rose Society will continue to campaign for Yorkshire Boundary markers around Saddleworth as well as markers denoting the historic boundaries of Saddleworth

## Diary Dates 2000

1 May. Boundary Walk with Friends of Real Lancashire of the Yorkshire border around Saddleworth.  
Mid July Saddleworth Show. Launch of the Saddleworth Rose.  
30 July Yorkshire Day Celebrations at the Museum.  
1 August (Yorkshire Day). Reading of the Yorkshire Day Declaration.  
6 November. Annual General Meeting at the White Lion, Delph.  
27 November. Lancashire Day Celebrations with Friends of Real Lancashire.

### The Buckstones Ghost By Phil Clay

I am certain there are numerous police officers who have professed to see ghosts during their nocturnal roaming around graveyards, churches and ancient houses, occupied and derelict, and I am no exception. For years the following has remained a mystery which I am sure has a logical explanation. If someone reading this has an answer I would be interested to hear it. But on reflection it may be that I would rather have it remain unexplained to preserve my belief in the occult.

The year was 1968; I was serving in the West Riding Constabulary, attached to the Road Traffic Division at Huddersfield. My beat stretched from Huddersfield Borough boundary to the Lancashire boundary at Saddleworth, a part of Yorkshire, which encloses a group of villages. To one of those, Uppermill, I had the good fortune to be posted.

The season was autumn, it was a fine but windy night with a full moon scudding between the clouds and a myriad of twinkling stars in the clear parts of the sky. I was working alone and everything and everybody was at peace, even the sheep and cattle were dozing behind a sheltering wall. I decided to visit Huddersfield Divisional H.Q. to kill time and to engage in some intelligent conversation with the night reserve man, who was also alone and would be grateful for a little company for an hour or so.

We settled down with large mugs of steaming tea, lit up a Capstan full strength and got stuck into the usual topics of conversation, the failings of the judicial system, football and politics not necessarily in that order. After we sacked all the Judges, the reason being that none came up to the standard set by Judge Jefferies, the hanging Judge, picked the team for Huddersfield town's Saturday fixture and done a hatchet job on the serving government, our discussion turned to ghosts, the supernatural and U.F.O's. For an hour or so we mulled over the pros and cons. Those that could be explained, such as the time that I had seen a flying saucer over Elland which, on obtaining a pair of binoculars, turned out to be pigeon's wings caught in the sun as they circled their loft. Those that could not be explained, for example, the strong smell of tobacco that wafted down the landing on a friend's old house every evening, even though no one smoked. The story was that some previous occupant who had departed his mortal coil had been known to have a last pipe before retiring. Eventually we concluded that we had open minds as to the possibility that there may be some truth in the appearance of certain manifestations. We parted company at one in the morning and as I still had some time to spare before retiring from duty I decide to return to Uppermill the long way round, along the A640, a moorland road which crossed the high Pennines. This route would take me via the Nont Sarah's Hotel, across Buckstone's moor, past the isolated and derelict Buckstone's Lodge and then eventually into the small village of Denshaw. After passing Nont Sarah's there wasn't any occupied building on the road until reaching Denshaw, some 12 miles distant.

Nights like this, when crossing the moor, always brought back memories of my school days and my favourite poem that had to be learned and recited, 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes.

"The wind was a torrent of Darkness among the gusty trees,  
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over, the purple moor,  
And the highwayman came riding, riding, riding,  
And the highwayman came riding up to the old inn door".

To fully enjoy this scenario I switched my headlights off, driving only on sidelights only. I traveled about a mile beyond the Nont Sarah's Hotel when I saw, in the moonlight, coming towards me, four horses, three with riders. My first thoughts were why should equestrians be out at this time of night without stirrup lights. As they got closer the second verse of the poem came vividly back to me as the first two riders fitted the description to a "T".

"He'd a French cocked hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin, A coat of claret velvet and breaches of brown doe skin, They fitted with never a wrinkle, his boots were up to his thigh, And he rode with a jewelled twinkle, his pistol butts a twinkle, His rapier hilt a twinkle, under the jewelled sky".

The third rider was in the dress of a serf, rough homespun shirt and trousers, leggings, leather doublet, and neckerchief, and he was leading a heavily laden packhorse. I slowed down as I passed them but they appeared oblivious to my presence. I stopped the car some hundred yards beyond the rider's turned round and overtook them, again there was no indication that they were aware of my interest. I turned the car round a second time and approached the group with the full intention of stopping to have a pleasant conversation with the riders to find out the reason for their presence on this isolated road in the middle of the night while dressed in such colourful costumes. As I slowly approached, the leading horseman acknowledged me by bowing as he touched his right hand to the brim of his hat. At this point a cold shiver ran down my spine and I decided that discretion was the better part of valour. There was no way I was going to stop within striking distance of their swords or pistols and so I pushed my foot down on the accelerator and made a rapid departure towards civilisation, home and safety.

The following morning I contacted the news desk at the "Huddersfield Examiner" and related my sightings of the apparitions with a view to solving the mystery, also to suggest it my make an interesting little story. As I was rather ashamed of the way I had made my escape I substituted an unknown motorist to be the craven coward who had fled the scene. I was later told that they, the newspaper reporters, had been unable to find any record of sponsored rides, fancy dress parties or anything else that would have caused three riders to cross a lonely moorland road in the dead of night, dressed in the style of clothing that would have been appropriate in the reign of King Charles.

I have traveled on the same road on hundreds of occasions since that day but never again did I see anything resembling those riders. It was probably coincidence the supernatural had been discussed just before my experience, but then again, was it? There must be many a tale to be told about the mysteries of those lonely moors and the people who have crossed them over the centuries.

**From Friends of Real Lancashire**  
**from Chris Dawson - Chairman Friends of Real Lancashire.**

The Friends of Real Lancashire would like to express their sincere thanks to members of the Saddleworth White Rose Society for their splendid support on Lancashire Day. The exchange of gifts between our two societies on the Lancashire/Yorkshire border at Lees, was an excellent example of cooperation in our common cause to promote true county identity. The War of the Roses is not yet over, but now members of the Red and White Rose Counties are united in fighting for the recognition that our two historic counties still exist in their entirety, despite the administrative upheavals of the past quarter century.

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